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MUSICAL COMPETITION FESTIVALS

BY

ERNEST FOWLES

Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music; Adjudicator in Pianoforte Playing at the London, Stratford and East London, North London, and other Musical Competition Festivals; Author of *Harmony in Pianoforte-Study, Studies in Musical Graces, Centre-Points in Pianoforte-Study*, etc.

This Mysterious and Divine Art . . . hath ever been had in great Estimation: Those who are Lovers hereof, must allow Musick to be the Gift of God; yet, like others his Graces and Benefits, is not given to the Idle; those that desire to have it, must reach it to them with the hand of Industry.

JOHN PLAYFORD: *A Brief Introduction to the Skill of Musick for Song and Viol.* (1654.)

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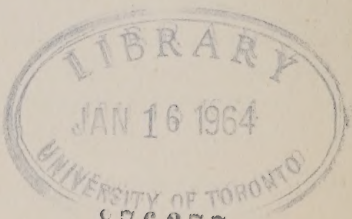
TO
JOHN GRAHAM

Ever unsparing of himself in the cause of competitive festivals throughout the country



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BY THE WAY

A YEAR or two ago, I was asked to lecture to a musical society in London upon 'The Experiences of a Pianoforte Adjudicator.' *Hinc illae lacrimae.* Hence, also, the audacity which has expanded the original text into a book which, though it be of modest dimensions, will probably be deemed, in no other respect, worthy of so sensitively necessitous an adjective.

It does not matter! He who dares no more than he can do never does more than he dares. If my daring be great, it cannot, at least, be greater than that first daring which accepted the responsibility attached to adjudicatorship without knowledge or experience of the nature of the task. The first tooth professionally pulled by a young dentist may be a success. It may also be a failure, the fact being made acutely evident to the patient.

Yet, the dentist must have his first pull. Even so, must there be a first adjudication for the young musician nervously anticipating the adventure.

Perhaps it is in the interest of the latter that this small book has been written. Perhaps the zealous and hardworked secretaries and their assistants have prompted its execution. Perhaps

my pen has been stimulated by the enthusiasm of the teachers whose loyalty is the mainspring of so many competitive gatherings. Perhaps the dominant thought in my mind has been the illumination of the musical laity in a matter which, whether they realize it or not, concerns them most nearly. I cannot tell. It is given to me only to write what I feel; and to feel deeply is one of the great compensations for the act of living.

It is for this reason that I offer no excuse for my somewhat ardent homily. It is possible that one may be discovered in the frank avowal of a love for music, a love which it is my most earnest wish should fertilize every thought. At least, my readers are welcome to so fragrant a text; which, moreover, will, in no slight degree, mitigate the rigours and waywardnesses of the discourse framed thereon.

E. F.

October, 1922.

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CHAPTER I

MUSIC

In earlier days of the modern Musical Competition Festival, there were not a few who prophesied the speedy extinction of the movement. Doubtless, many of these recalled the phenomenal rise of the 'Spelling Bee,' and its almost equally phenomenal eclipse. Surely, it was thought, a similar fate must pursue all attempts to stimulate enterprise in the commonplace sphere of pure competition. The position of the Musical Competition Festival to-day, after so many years of activity, is a sufficient answer to the doubts and scepticisms which were the necessary issues of misconception and want of prescience.

For all doubters and sceptics of the kind, it is impossible not to feel profound sympathy. Their very misgivings arose from a misunderstanding of the part destined to be played by music in the uplifting of the human race, and, often, it is to be feared, from a misapprehension of the nature of

music and of the character of its appeal to the mind of man.

It may be thought that the reference to one of the experimental competitive enterprises of the past involves a species of comparison between it and the newer and more living form of activity considered in this book. In truth, the only useful comparison possible is that which indicates the chasm of difference between the two, upon the grounds of human interest and service. As soon as the function of competition is wrested from its more sublunary sphere, as the energizing force in the daily struggle for bread, and made to do duty in a region untouched by carnal necessity, it becomes an influence which tends towards the well-being of the higher instincts of man. So far, spelling bees and all similar forms of passing amusement were to be heartily commended as pure, if elementary, efforts to awaken human interest.

Nevertheless, with all their freedom from the less worthy phases of rivalry, efforts of this nature could never, in themselves, contain the germs of permanence. They could, for instance, provide no opportunity for the exercise of those human attributes which lie beyond the sphere of mental gymnastics or of mere physical emulation. To

take the act of spelling as a basis for competitive enterprise was to deal with one of the elements of letters and to leave the great world of literature untouched. It would be as reasonable to anticipate enjoyment in connexion with competitions, presumably concerned with the art of painting but, in practice, limited to the freehand treatment of lines and curves.

It is evident, therefore, that the success of the Musical Competition Festival is due to its recognition of the fact that any appeal to men and women, in which the question of art is concerned, must be based upon the larger issues relative to the best part of human nature. No appeal to a part of man's nature or interests, without reference to the ampler desires of his being, can in itself become a matter of permanent concern. The question, then, immediately before us relates to the appeal made by every festival worthy of the name. What is the character of that appeal?

The answer may be given in one word—Music! Men and women are only dimly conscious of how much they owe to this wonderful art. They are, for the most part, wholly unaware how greatly they are influenced by the songs and tunes of humankind. The knowledge of the power of this universal language, this true pasigraphy, is of

comparatively recent birth. There are many musicians who, as yet, do not realize the mysticism of the world in which they live. But, in the half-light of these days, one can visualize mentally a change which is gradually coming over the attitude of the world at large, towards the least understood as well as the latest apprehended of the glorious arts which fill the spheres with meaning and the heart of man with rejoicing.

There are many who advance the belief that music is incapable of the mission to which those who love it, and desire to use its power for the benefit of mankind, believe it to be accredited. Such pronouncements leave one cold. They possess no more significance than the *non deus est* of the self-styled atheist. We know differently. There are things of this life which it is impossible to reduce to the indignity of exact demonstration. There are matters pertaining to individual lives which it is almost impious to attempt to particularize. We know the power of music. We are not far from days when it performed miracles of solace and compensation. Indeed, the opportunity often comes to those of us who are in the thick of the struggle, to observe the pursuit of music as a builder of character, as an encouragement to sane ambition, as a prompter of healthy thought. It

is not possible to subject these things to an analytic test. We are content gratefully to remark them. Nor is it possible to explain why these things should be, why music should possess a secret which reaches to the innermost sanctuary of human lives. We would not seek for an explanation of the influence of natural beauty upon the soul of man. We are satisfied that the influence is there and, in consequence, we look for it, we expect it as confidently as we anticipate the working of the law of gravitation to-day, to-morrow, and for ever.

In one respect it may be permitted to us to pry into the secrets which music holds so tenaciously to herself. For her influence upon the imaginative life we may fail to find a reason unassailable by the psychologist; yet, is it not possible to discover at least one point of human contact which will go far to prove its reality? Such a point of contact may assuredly be found in the aural appeal of the art. Music is the Emperor among all the influences which reach man through the sense of hearing. It is eminently probable that this sense is the greatest of the five. Mental vivacity and cheerfulness are often the companions of the blind; of the deaf, rarely. One could cease to be responsive to taste, to smell, or even to touch, and find the

deprivation light compared with that which would follow the loss of hearing. The sights and sounds of Nature at her best are entrancing, but it is the sounds which we remember best; for these remind us of communion with our fellows. There is a part of the world where the birds never sing. As I write these words my little feathered friends are twittering in the garden near, and the message which they bring is greater to me than the sight of trees and flowers, of distances and hues.

Do we not here find an adequate reason for the charm of music upon the average mind? Men will go anywhere to satisfy the natural craving of their aural sense. The satire of the writer of the *Acts of the Apostles* upon the Athenians, that they 'spent their time in nothing else, but . . . to hear some new thing' shows want of insight. It is the prerogative of man to hear all that he can, anywhere, and at all times. Growth in experience and selective power is, to a large extent, due to the use of his prerogative. Experience teaches him that to obtain the healthiest results from the working of his individual senses, the obligation is laid upon him to determine that each shall be kept attuned to the higher purposes of its existence. Selective power reminds him that he must not subject his eye to the contemplation of the sordid

and the cruel, or his ear to the reception of uglinesses and crudities. Thus, as far as lies within his power, he learns to choose the sights he will look upon and the sounds he will hear. And when the ear is in question he flies, as to a natural refuge, to the great fount of music for help and companionship

There is yet another point to be considered. The ear is the channel of communication in every form of plastic language. Since, in more than one respect, music is the greatest of the means of human intercourse, it follows that those who come to listen to it have to their credit a very excellent and pertinent reason for the act. And, lest there should be some who think disdainfully of the influence or even of the existence of such a reason, let it at once be said that, very possibly, but few people are conscious that, in themselves, they are testimonies to the magnetic and impelling power of music. As a matter of undoubted fact, people attend a musical festival or a concert, often with no further motive than that they feel a desire to listen to music. Many have no acquaintance with the technique of the art. Many are, in truth, colossally ignorant of music, and there is no ignorance so truly colossal as that found in connexion with the art of music. Yet they desire to

listen! The fact might perhaps be regarded as a paradox were it not possible to offer a measure of explanation.

For every man and every woman there is a definite limit in the process of verbal receptivity. The limit necessarily varies in individual cases, but its existence and reality are inflexible truths in the story of human life. In the experience of every soul there is a point beyond which words will not bear the weight of the burden of thought. At this point it is given to music to fill the place which otherwise would be barren of expression. In other words, music may be held to express the thoughts —higher or deeper as may be the case—which lie outside the reach of words. And—let it be duly noted—for such consolation, wisdom, or satisfaction as music may bring, technical equipment in the art is by no means an indispensable condition. There are men and women attuned to the message of music who can lay no claim to acquaintance with its constructive mysteries. They serve without knowledge. They wait without impatience. They come to the feast and rarely go away unsatisfied.

These two reasons offer a sufficient explanation of the steadily growing numbers of those who attend Musical Competition Festivals. It is possible that

some are attracted by the wholly natural motive arising from personal interest in individual competitors; but, even when this is the original purpose, is it not a great thing to get people to be present at competitions which not infrequently last for some hours? In every concourse of people it is always probable that some come to scoff and remain to pray. Every organization which brings men and women together—political, social, religious—acts upon the eventuality and makes provision for it. Does not the Musical Competition Festival? Think for a moment! It is no slight thing to any audience to hear an example of fine music personally interpreted by twenty young people or more. *It is an education in the art of listening.*

It is quite probable that friendly critics and morose doubters have not given full weight to this aspect of the case. The battle-cry of the musical educationist is 'Listen!' and again 'Listen!' Lose no opportunity—such is his advice—which helps you to listen intelligently to music. Yet have I never heard a protagonist of this type remind his audience that just such an opportunity lies ever at their door in the form of the Musical Competition Festival. It is an omission which this slight book must make an attempt to rectify.

In instrumental music, ear, eye, and hand have

to be in full accord. In the subjective act of listening the whole effort is concerned with the ear. The act of listening is the most important of all the functions connected with music. The intaking of musical impressions may be regarded as of even greater importance to the would-be player than to those who have no further ambition than to listen. To both classes of enthusiasts does the Musical Competition Festival proffer a helping hand. To both it exclaims aloud—'Come and listen!' To both it promises pleasant, if at times strenuous, discipline in what is confessedly an exercise of considerable intellectual profit. In brief, the competitive festival provides the means whereby the ignorant may bring to the birth the feeling for musical shapes latent in the large majority of men and women, and the more experienced may yet further develop a power which is one of the greatest of all assets to the life of the imagination.

CHAPTER II

THE AUDIENCE

No one can look at an audience at one of the great competitive festivals without being conscious of the enormous strides made in the direction of musical appreciation during the last few years. Moreover, the fact is patent that here are no free seats, here is no ' paper ! ' The audience is genuine in so far as it has paid for the right of entrance. Perhaps the Musical Competition Festival has solved one of those particularly thorny questions which harass the concert-giver without public, press, or influence. Perhaps it is educating people in the habit, not only of attending musical functions, but of expecting to pay for the privilege. If so, yet another pæan of gratitude is distinctly due to the movement.

Musical audiences are peculiarly sensitive to every impression which usually affects the gathering together of a number of people of varied tastes

and dispositions ; but, in addition, they are subject to the subtle and practically indefinable influence which music invariably exercises over the purely temperamental side of personality. No other type of audience is like a musical audience, and the fact should be remembered by all those who are actively engaged in the work of a festival. It should, for instance, be one of the duties of every official to think largely of the audience and to make every possible provision for its comfort and enjoyment.

There is, however, a greater issue at stake. The audience is one of the greatest essentials to the educative success of a festival. For myself, I can never look at the audience at a competition without feeling the greatness of the occasion. Here is a number of men and women listening in silence to repeated performances of the same example of music. It is a veritable lesson in the appreciation of music. For, let us remember, the single rendering of an unfamiliar work, as at a concert, can rarely bring understanding to the vast majority of the hearers. The mass of mankind loves music with which it is perfectly familiar. This is the reason why the programmes of our recitalists so seldom stray from the paths of convention and tradition. Now, music is just the thing which will

bear repeating and which, indeed, needs to be repeated again and again before it forces an entry into elementary souls. This is why the repetitions of the same work form so educative a feature of a musical festival. Unfamiliar compositions, possibly by native writers, get their chance of public appraisement. The audience, at first unresponsive and unalert, gradually falls under the spell of the oft-repeated strains and, when the test is over, regrets that they will be heard no more.

This, however, is not the only advantage which springs from the hearing of many-times-repeated music. An audience, keen to follow each competition, takes a long step towards musical discrimination; that is, it learns to distinguish between good, mediocre, and bad performance. Music is emphatically a thing of the home. Concerts are well, the exhibition of personal achievement in the sphere of digital or vocal display may perhaps be said to have its place in the scheme of things; but the greatest triumphs reserved for music are those to be found in the home-life when its presence and pursuit may even become hallowed by associations and memories.

It is probably not an exaggeration to affirm that the music of English homes has been of a far lower standard than musicians generally have

been willing to recognize. Perhaps a semi-conscious sense of responsibility has made them all too eager victims of an unfortunate phase of self-delusion. Certain it is that the master, at the individual lesson, but rarely visualizes a young girl as a potential uplifter of the music in her own home; still more rarely does he think it worth the trouble to remember that the goodness, the mediocrity or badness of his student may be a reflection of the musical atmosphere which prevails in her native surroundings. Confronted by conditions of this kind, one course alone is possible to those who desire that the greatest light shall be thrown upon the subject of home music, and that is to come out into the open, if only to see what other people are doing, to learn how to discriminate between the good and the bad, to discover the hopelessness of all mediocre effort.

It is precisely in this vital matter that an audience at a Musical Competition Festival garners so rich a store of experience. The father, the mother, the friend, compare performance with performance; and always, in the back of the mind, the thought asserts itself that this rendering or that is less—or possibly more—musical than the efforts to which they are accustomed in the case of their own young people at home. To learn the difference between the weak and the strong

is the first step towards strength. It has ever been the misfortune of students of music that they have so often lacked the opportunity of estimating the value of their own efforts by comparison with those who are stronger than themselves; and the inevitable issue has been the erection of a standard of unashamed mediocrity, gilded metal which has been received as gold of the purest stamp.

For this reason, one welcomes heartily the presence of the elder folks of the home. As a rule these are ready to take their cue in matters musical from their young people, but, since they look out upon life with a larger measure of experience, they may often be conscious that all is not well with the music around them. Nevertheless, they will keep silent and remain content that the impressionable years of their children are, to some extent, engaged by the interest which they appear to take in their coquetries with music. To ask for more, they opine, might endanger the whole. Half-measures are better than possible vacuity of interest. In this manner music, instead of being, as it should be, the pure unifying influence from the world Beautiful, is allowed to become a makeweight, a superficial pastime of but little account to the wider issues of the home-life.

Now, it is not possible to any member of an audience at a musical competition to leave the

room untouched by the experience. Should the music of the home be impoverished, the fact will be emphasized; moreover, a mental resolve will have to be made *one way or the other.* It is not impossible that the mind will not be readily conscious of the necessity which prompts the making of the resolution. Still, the step will be taken. It is not permitted to any soul to hear the call to higher things and to remain coldly negative. Movement must follow the call; upward or—downward. Lest I may be charged with a taint of pessimism, let me say that I know the progressive spirit which animates the musical festival and am persuaded of its inherent reality. The added interest in musical matters now so clearly manifested by the various audiences is a proof of marked growth in musical discrimination, a growth which, quite truly and naturally, may be regarded as one of the most beneficent results of the movement.

The audience may now be considered from a more personal point of view. Although teachers will necessarily be there, the large majority of the members will probably be local music-lovers, men and women attracted by the eternal call of youth; in a word, amateurs. So inherently gracious a word, it is a tragedy that it should so often be

wantoned upon the lips of those who are supposed to live by serving music. Does not the arena of the concert room or hall of competition place all —amateur musicians and so-called professional musicians—on a fairly common level? What is the hall-mark of merit—if there be any—in individual cases of the kind? There can be but one, and that is merely love for music. Love, as in most of the essentials of life, is the pulling, the restraining and governing force. Subtract love for music from the act of listening to it and the remainder is a negligible interest in the trappings of the art: technical brilliance and the ostentation of physical acquirement.

It is not difficult, therefore, to arrive at the thought that an audience at a musical festival should be regarded as an assembly of people drawn together by a mutual love for a thing which is altogether lovely and worthy of the deepest devotion. This, at least, should be the mental attitude towards such a gathering on the part of officials, adjudicators, and competitors. And, since attitude is one of the great unseen realities of personality, it follows that to assume such a love in the case of an audience is the first step towards obtaining that atmosphere of sympathy, of sincere waiting upon the muse, without which every effort made is shorn of the one valid reason for the making.

There is one aspect of the Musical Competition Festival which, as a rule, is entirely overlooked. The misunderstandings and complaints of parents have been one of the greatest drawbacks in the life of the private teacher. Honesty obliges me to confess that my own sympathies are nearly always with the parents! In the past they have had no means of appraising results in musicianship. Most probably the large majority are but indifferent judges. But it is impossible to forget the fact that, after all, they are parents; moreover, a tolerably long experience has shown me the extreme rarity of the cases in which they are helped to understand either the ideals of the teacher or the manner in which those ideals affect the lives of their children.

It is in this direction that the Musical Competition Festival is doing magnificent work. In all probability the best proof of this is afforded by the attitude of the parents of to-day contrasted with that of a generation back. In earlier days the decisions of judges were often the cause of heart-burnings and of general dissatisfaction. In the circumstances it was inevitable that those who had profound faith in the musical virtues of their young people, but who had never had a real opportunity of testing those virtues, should feel grudgeful against adjudicators who appeared to

make light of such prowess in the arena of performance. Now, however, all this is happily changed. Dissatisfaction must ever be one of the passing results of disillusionment. The parent whose pride in his child is not ruled by a sense of proportion is particularly vulnerable to the shaft of criticism. Yet, when all is taken into account, the comparative fewness of the complaints or protests which, in these days, reach the ears of the infinitely patient promoters of musical festivals is as gratifying as it is a sign of enduring progress. Parents have learned the lesson that the Musical Competition Festival is as much their festival as it is that of their children. They have succeeded in grasping its real purpose. More and more generally, they view it as a function which represents their annual opportunity to come to grips with the educational side of music; with, that is to say, that part of the subject in which they and their children are very directly concerned.

It is manifest that, if this be the case with parents, a festival is of equal concern to teachers. Far too long have parents and teachers been victims of antipathy. 'Necessary evils' is a time-honoured phrase—to teachers! There has never been a valid reason for this attitude of half-suppressed antagonism. Teachers have perhaps

been prone to flaunt their knowledge; parents, to regard the teacher of their children as representative of a type but a grade above semi-skilled labour. The teacher may have been unwilling to descend from the pedestalic position; the parent, to understand the consecrative aspect of the teacher's vocation.

What sheer humanity could not do, what could not be reached by the instincts of reason and good feeling, has, to a large extent, been effected by the Musical Competition Festival. In every audience parents and teachers are found side by side, and it is extremely probable that no more potent force exists for the healing of the ungenial breaches of the past. It has been one of my many enjoyable experiences to remark friendships between parents and teachers which have had their origin in fortuitous meetings at musical festivals.

A moment may now be given to a more intimate side of the position of an audience; one which, without offence, may be regarded as pertaining to conduct. There may be some who will regard the use of such a word as suggestive of the regulation of children in the school-room. Such will be reluctant to admit that conduct can, in any way, relate to themselves as members of an audience. They have paid for the right of entrance—so they

will aver—and, provided that they do nothing outrageous, nothing which would condemn them morally in the eyes of their fellows, they are perfectly free to do as they list. It is an altogether fallacious idea, and derives the force which it possesses for a certain type of mind from generations of want of intimacy with the inwardness of music.

It should be understood by all concerned that two distinct privileges are connoted by the right of entry to a musical competition : (*a*) The privilege of supporting the cause by the necessary payment ; (*b*) the privilege of being present. The insignificant number of people who do not realize this and who, notwithstanding, make their presence felt at competitive gatherings would perhaps be better advised were they to remain away until more enlightened counsels came to their aid.

Further, a competition should not be made an occasion for unfriendly fault-finding or unsympathetic criticism. These things may be found in the concert room, where they may be securely indulged in by those who do not realize that a spirit of unbalanced criticism is antagonistic to an experience of enjoyment. The atmosphere of a musical competition, however, is wholly unlike that of a concert hall. It is a place where the unfledged are just learning to spread their wings, where those

who are just able to fly are seizing an opportunity to explore farther afield, where those who are frightened at their own temerity in flying at all are seeking an experience which will give them a greater sense of security; moreover, it is a place where unfledged and fully-fledged meet on the same ground of battle and on such terms of equality or inequality as may lie in the lap of the gods. In truth, it would be hard to come at a meeting place of men and women, of girls and boys, in which the divine quality of sympathy was more greatly needed than at the competitions of a musical festival.

The promotion of an undercurrent of sympathy is of greater importance to the success of a festival than is usually supposed. It should run through every competition like the distinguishing thread which, at one time in our history, ran through the cables used in the Royal Navy. Cut the cable where you would; the ubiquitous thread told you of its origin and ownership. Psychologically, the presence of sympathy makes all the difference to competitors and adjudicator. It may be, it probably will be, unexpressed by act or word; but in some inexplicable if not mysterious way its influence will be felt, it will be in the very air, encircling the youthful aspirants with a consciousness of conquest over the difficulties which lie in their path.

There is one golden means by which an audience can express the sympathy which it is unable to indicate by the spoken word, and that is by preserving silence during the performance of each competitor. A tendency to utter the faintest whisper should be suppressed. As a matter of undoubted fact, the whispers of an audience are more distracting to competitors and adjudicator than the outspoken comment or unabashed irrelevancy.

Touching upon this matter of silence, I may mention three types of comment which have reached me at various festivals.

Comment I. (From a member of an audience) : 'It was impossible to follow the competition owing to the half-whispered conversation which went on throughout. People who attend festivals in order to talk should be suppressed!'

Comment II. (From a competitor) : 'I didn't play my best, for I could feel the audience. People talked, too ; and that always puts me out!'

Comment III. (From an adjudicator) : 'No! I cannot say that I have much trouble in obtaining silence. People are really very considerate on the whole. If I hear talking, it is my invariable practice to stop the competition and explain why silence is imperative. After that, all goes well.'

These comments are interesting as illustrative of the three mental attitudes respectively delineated. The first approximates to a very natural feeling of resentment. It is quite easy to understand the position of the lover of music who is prevented from enjoying that which he has come to enjoy by unthoughtful and irresponsible chatter.

The second comment contains a touch of pathos. It is not resentful. There is no rancour or ill will; merely a regret that an ideal of concentrative effort has been thwarted through the fault of those who do not understand the relationship of mental concentration to musical performance.

The third comment represents the attitude of the large majority of adjudicators whom it is my happiness to know. The mental detachment required for their task is of a very high order; indeed, so greatly is this the case, that the mere interruption of thought involved in an appeal for silence is frequently an extremely painful experience. Needless to say, every member of an audience should remember that the standards of conduct associated with a musical competition are not limited to the officials, competitors and adjudicator, and that it is a paramount duty to determine that protests of the kind shall never be required.

In one apparently unimportant matter may I claim to be the spokesman of all who are interested in the continuance and expansion of our Musical Competition Festivals. It is a frequent custom to permit, if not actually to encourage, applause in the course of competitions. No cogent reason can be urged against the practice generally. It is an altogether natural and frequently spontaneous demonstration of the good understanding which exists between the audience and the competitors. Nevertheless, it contains an element of danger to the spirit of fairness which ought to be the most prominent feature of every competition. Only too often the applause is of a distinctly varied type, and reflects a bias on the part of the audience which it should regard as a point of honour to keep to itself. It is of course inevitable that some performances will give far more pleasure than others; but it is one thing to be mentally alive to variations of standard, and quite another to display the fact by outward demonstrations. To speak with perfect frankness, it is manifestly unfair; it is calculated to disturb the calm judgment of an inexperienced adjudicator; in brief, it is just one of those things in which, if they have ever sinned, the members of an audience will not repeat the error when the issues at stake are understood. It would perhaps be too much to

suggest that, on a tiring and broiling day, an audience should give the same meed of hearty applause at the conclusion of each performance. The remedy, however, is simple. Let there be no applause until the last competitor has been heard. Then, let it be sincere, hearty, and prolonged. The young people will deserve the best that the audience can do in the direction of vociferous congratulation.

It is difficult to bring these remarks to a close without reminding the music-lovers of every country, in which the Musical Competition Festival is a permanent feature, that it is their particular obligation to make themselves co-workers with those enthusiasts whose energy and foresight have made possible so great an opportunity for musical advancement. Such service as can be rendered by most people must inevitably be restricted to attendance at competitions; but service of this kind is great service, particularly when it is the outcome of love for the young and for the healing art of music. For myself, I see as in a vision the musical festivals of the future, with overflowing audiences experienced in the art of listening to music, responsive to every phase of its delicate idiom, proving to all the world that, within the magic of its influence, may be found one of the greatest binding forces in the social life of man.

CHAPTER III

THE COMPETITORS

A PEEP into the waiting-room before a children's competition will reveal a crowd of happy, laughing, rosy-cheeked youngsters; thoughtless, as is the nature of children, of anything save that which belongs to the immediate moment—the new frock just put on, the last tale from school, the frolic and the juvenile jest. Perchance, in the audience will be found the anticipatory parents and nervous teachers. They, at any rate, must be excluded from the place in which the little rivals await the call to action. Clearly, they would be out of the picture in this atmosphere of entire naturalness.

Let us take another peep into the same waiting-room before a competition of players of more mature years. What a difference is revealed! The very sunlight seems to have gone, an influence of gloom to have taken possession of every corner! You can hear—if you desire to play the eavesdropper—exclamations of dread as the fateful

summons comes to each competitor. Indications of 'nervousness' abound on every hand, and may be observed in the struggles to keep the hands warm, in the forced attitudes of apparent nonchalance, in the very faces of the willing—or unwilling—victims.

What is the reason for this difference between the child of tender years, and, possibly, the same child at a more mature age? The world at large accepts the difference as natural and, by the acceptation, declares its belief that, in the case of those who are approaching or who have reached early manhood and womanhood, nervousness is to be looked for as an inevitable accompaniment to musical performance. The task immediately before us, therefore, is to ascertain whether the naturalness of the little child is a condition which arises from a lack of that experience possessed by the elder competitors or, conversely, whether the neurotic potentialities of the latter are symptomatic of healthy development in the passage from one stage of youth to another.

The word *nervousness* is an inapt description of the mental processes concerned in the malady implied. The quality of nervousness is one of the essentials of every performance which can be regarded as of art value. It is impossible that a nervousless rendering of a composition could also

be an effort of personal interpretation. Consequently, let us away with the word and select the right descriptive term from the vocabulary of human experience. It can easily be found. It is merely *fright*, that property common alike to men and animals which paralyses all directive nervous and muscular force.

Now, it is very necessary that young people should ask themselves why the element of fright should enter into their lives and spoil so much of their praiseworthy work.* At least, they are not helped by a reference to the experience as an example of self-consciousness. This is a virtual misuse of a valuable word. Self-consciousness is a great asset strongly allied to self-respect and self-control, and without it wisely directed effort is impossible to man or woman. When the expression *self-consciousness* is used in a disparaging sense, it is not this property to which reference is intended, but something of an infinitely less pleasant nature; to wit, self-esteem, self-centration, and the like.

Any experienced adjudicator will agree that the examples which come before him of pure conceit and absorption in the ego of personality form a

* It is true that little children may also suffer from a kindred disability, but the fright of the very young is of a distinctly different stamp. This is a comprehensive, though a passing, terror, and embraces everything around them, including the sympathetic official who calls their names. The fright of the elder competitors is connected wholly with their actual performance.

negligible number among competitors in general; on the other hand, he will as firmly bear witness to the fact that large numbers are obviously prevented from reaching their high-water mark of interpretative efficiency by the sheer terror evoked by their environment. What is the reason for this? Is it possible to offer any remedy which will assuage the sufferings due to 'nervousness'?

Many a psychologist and many a musician will answer these questions in vastly different ways. The one may refer to measures of control which affect the deepest parts of our being; the other, to the necessity for ensuring such mastery over the difficulties of performance that sheer 'technique' shall carry the sufferers through.

Now, the psychological attitude may be perfectly correct. Self-control is an admirable doctrine when it is concerned with the direction of sane and laudable enterprise; but self-control may be a help to ventures which, by no stretch of the imagination, can be so described. The expert pickpocket is often an example of extraordinary finesse in the art of self-control!

The possible attitude of the musician, on the other hand, is at least plausible. What, surely, can be a greater incentive to the art of successful performance than to feel that added and ever added power over the physical difficulties of the situation

will eventually render the player invulnerable to 'nerves'?

To speak frankly, both points of view are open to serious question. On the one hand is preached the duty of self-control, but with no guarantee that the conditions which call for its exercise are worth the strenuousness of the effort. On the other hand, the real problem is not touched. On the contrary, it is brushed contemptuously aside or, at least, is acknowledged in so far that a wholly questionable assuagement is proposed by way of cure. Practise hard—such is the advice often given to the student of the keyboard—get your passages so executively instinctive that no mental disturbance can have the power to derange the clearness and directness of your playing. In other words, it is suggested that the material shall, if possible, be allowed to dominate both the mental and the spiritual!

From the virtual *impasse* thus brought into view there is but one way of escape. Ignoring every preconceived idea upon the subject, let us ask ourselves whether it may not be possible that the original trouble is largely, if not wholly, caused by the formation of certain unintelligent habits in the course of years of study at the keyboard.

There is one unfortunate possibility connected

with pianoforte playing which is virtually unique in art-expression. The brush of the painter must be stimulated by a mental image before the canvas can glow with meaning. The pen of the writer cannot trace intelligible signs on the paper unless a conscious mental idea be present in the mind. But it is possible to do much at an instrument, both in the way of practice and in the act of performance, with no clear mental perception, either of the content of the music or of the conditions of executiveship. This grim contingency lies in wait for every student of the pianoforte, and sounds a note of warning against the fatal error which mistakes the path of reality in study and wanders into the by-ways of the mechanical and unreal.

There are many sides to the study of practical music, but, whatever the physical, mental, or imaginative powers of the player, there can be no question that every act which forms a part of performance should be the product of a previous act of mental volition or prevision.

There is, for example, the act of tone-production. *From brain to string*—as one distinguished writer has said—not, that is, from string to brain. Then, there is the purely muscular condition to be considered. *From brain to key*, not from key to brain.

When the conception of tone is correlated with a state of muscular freedom, the energy is liberated for dealing with passages of various types of keyboard difficulty. Here, also, the same helpful law prevails. *From brain to the source of the difficulty.* There is no physical perplexity which cannot be greatly mitigated, if not entirely conquered, by previously thinking out the problem before it is applied to the keyboard.

The necessity for mental prevision mounts higher. The piece is approached and brings with it the added difficulties which usually encircle the reading of notation. *From brain to the written notes.* The rule is still operative, for the obvious reason that there can be no other true *modus operandi.* This necessarily entails that, before the hand touches the keys, the various elementary details which appear in the score must be mastered. For some the symbols of pitch will present a difficulty ; but for the majority of young students the time-notation will prove the rock of stumbling. As soon as the notational perplexities have been conquered, the way lies open to a grasp of the successive musical thoughts which form a composition. The first effort takes as its motto *From brain to thought-arrangement* and consists largely of a topographical review of the whole, the mental concern being now with the disposition of the various thoughts in the structure of the movement.

Perhaps the last stage of mental prevision will be concerned with the emotional rendering of the work. *From brain to musical content* will amply describe the type of effort now required. It will be the endeavour of the student mentally to discover the zones of stress and repose, the climaxes of the various thoughts, the effects of contrast and of dynamic shadings, and the like.

It is quite evident that, judged in the light of the foregoing remarks, the method of study pursued by a large number of prospective players is unintelligent and unworthy of serious attention. There can, for instance, be no virtue in the act of tone-production which is not the result of a previous mental consciousness of the type and colour of the tone required. Nor can there be ultimate muscular resiliency when its adoption as a part of the player's craft is not prompted by an intelligent apprehension of the principles involved. Again, the player confronted by a keyboard difficulty of pronounced severity may, without recourse to the faculty of thought and by dint of many mechanical repetitions, obtain physical mastery, but the purpose of the difficulty and its adaptation to the musical scheme before him will, most surely, elude his grasp. Perhaps the most subtle form of temptation to the student is concerned with the question of notation. Unable spontaneously to read the

symbols of the score, he is prone to take the music to the keyboard, in the hope that it will help to clarify the notation. It is a vain hope! He succeeds only in doing two things badly. To some it may be a relief to feel that, day by day, both the reading and the playing of the music get less bad, but the unnecessary and purely artificial difficulty ought never to have been created. A kindred line of reasoning will show how often a similar practice is destructive of perception of the structure of a composition as well as of its emotional purport. The player who reads a new work directly at the keyboard misses the vital intimacies of the music, nor can he ever afterwards regain the position of absolute mental freedom towards the composition which was lost through his one lapse from intelligence.

Thus far, the simple doctrine of mental study and prevision would appear to call for little more than an attitude of assent based upon its entire reasonableness. There is, however, a further problem to be faced. In these days we hear much of the aural question. We do not always stop to consider the momentous nature of the issues which arise out of that question; still less are we conscious that the key to what we call self-control in performance is also concerned with the acquirement of aural understanding.

There must be no misapprehension of the application of the phrase *aural understanding* to the work of the pianoforte student. There are not a few who object to the previous mental study of music intended for performance, and, curiously enough, the chief objectors are found among those who insist most strenuously upon the cultivation of the aural instinct. 'Why,' they exclaim, 'should time be spent upon the mental study of notation, seeing that ninety-nine per cent of players are unable to visualize the written notes as living sounds!' It is a peculiarly earnest though specious objection. I would be the last to discourage the wholesome teachings of the now fortunately numerous advocates of aural study, but we must be prepared to view the subject in the most comprehensive manner; from the standpoint of the general student, and not only through the atmosphere of the aural class.

The quality of human aural receptivity is infinite in range and variety. No two individuals listen to or hear music precisely in the same way. Whether from the standpoint of a performer or from that of a listener, no two people ever arrive at a similar aural conception of a composition. It is possible, however, to reduce the innumerable varieties of aural attention to two main classes. The first contains those who possess the power to hear the

minutiae of musical expression ; the second, those whose aural capacity is limited to a general grasp of musical effect. These classes exist without respect of persons. There are many who belong to the first class, but from whom opportunities for gaining practical musical experience have been withheld. On the other hand, the place of the very large majority of musical people, students or otherwise, is in the second class. At this point, a question intrudes itself. Is the first class necessarily higher than the second ? It depends upon many circumstances. There are people, wholly unable to distinguish between interval and interval or between chord and chord, whose delight in music is unfeignedly sincere. Conversely, the phenomenon is not unknown of minds, keenly analytic in interval and chordal discrimination, but unable to appreciate that side of music which makes so ideal an appeal to men and women not similarly endowed. At the same time, no argument ought to be drawn from these facts to deter students of the pianoforte from making the bravest of attempts to enter the first of the two classes. There is no deprivation to the player so great as that associated with inability to translate the written notes of music into intimate realities of sound.

It is possible that purists may be found who would advocate that, since aural power is so

infinite a necessity to a player, it would be well to postpone keyboard work and to throw the whole weight of study into aural discipline. Life, however, is too short for the adventure; moreover, it is possible to discipline the ear in many directions, and no instrumental student should be so dull as to anticipate that any work at the pianoforte can be inspiring in the absence of an aural effort which grows daily in impetus and volume.

In emphasis upon aural needs, there is no duty which falls to the lot of the pianist like the act of mental study. The whole process is one long course of self-questioning upon the matter. 'What *does* it sound like?' is a poignant, self-depreciatory protest upon the lips of those who, by every law of logic, should be able to auralize the written language of sound as the ear of the reader grasps that of literature. As an encouraging fact, it may be stated that persistency in asking this question is often responsible for the growth of an overmastering desire to overleap the aural barrier, a desire which, it is almost unnecessary to add, may prove the first step to conquest.

Hence, we arrive at the conception that the acts of mental study and aural appreciation do not represent two divergent paths of effort, but one complete process of illuminating discipline. The consistent application of this process to the study

of music irradiates it with meaning before the physical act interprets in outward form the conceptions of the mind. However dark his original aural condition, no student can pursue a daily and enthusiastic mental study of musical compositions —particularly those intended for public performance—without ultimately achieving a wide measure of relief from his former disability. No master of his subject would be so obtuse as to advance the opinion that mental study may or should take the place of direct aural training in class-work; but the comprehensiveness of the subject of ear-discipline in the training of a player indicates that no help should be withheld which, in the slightest degree, brings strength to an aural apparatus weakened by virtual disuse or by mental apathy.

This has been a long reference to the possible cause of the fright which disables so many competitors at musical festivals. But the necessity has been laid upon me to declare my firm belief in the only true remedial measures which will meet the need. The competitor who has reached a stage of familiarity with his music through a process of absorbing mental study has his mind so full of his subject that the purely outward environment at the time of testing has no power to deflect him from the effort of interpretation. He is mindless of his audience and mindful of his

message. This, in brief, is the great secret of self-control in the act of musical performance. When, during the rendering of a work, it is obvious that the element of self-control is wanting, it is but a method of informing the adjudicator that the art of playing has been regarded merely as a physical experience. No player who has been trained only in a digital mastery of the keyboard can ever rise to a mental absorption so real and enduring that outward circumstances have no power to bend the line of purpose.*

In all probability, the large majority of the faults committed by competitors are connected, directly or indirectly, with weakness of mental grasp. Prominent among these is the uncertain memory, with the numerous 'slips' and unconscious departures from the text. My advice is often sought with reference to the desirability of encouraging competitors to play without book. The opportunity is here afforded me to re-affirm what I have so often said in public.

* This must not be interpreted as a negation of the purely psychological laws which bear upon the subject of self-control. The whole force of the present argument is concerned with the quality of the musical effort in connexion with which it is desired that the faculty of self-control should be exercised. Speaking psychologically, it is possible to cultivate a high degree of self-control in matters which are wholly unworthy of the mental and moral effort. It follows, therefore, that the teaching of psychology with reference to self-control in performance presupposes a proper and logical basis of study in the preparation of the music performed.

The whole question of memorizing in relation to music depends upon the previous mental grasp of the material to be memorized. There can be no doubt, however, that large numbers of competitors who are entirely without the power of mental prevision play, notwithstanding, without book and with apparent success. The solution of the mystery—for a mystery it seems to many—lies in an observation of the part played by the sub-conscious mind in the repetitions of complex movements. In certain phases of factory life it is not uncommon to see a mechanic making a number of complicated movements with dazzling rapidity and with never a mischance; moreover, he is able to converse with no apparent disturbance of his routine of action. It is to this order of effort that much of the so-called memorizing at the pianoforte belongs. No real mental effort has ever been made. It is a frequent remark of key-boardists of this type that, as soon as they have 'mastered' a piece, they find that, without further practice of any kind, they can play it 'from memory'!

It is perhaps too much to expect that young people will desist from playing their pieces thus; literally, from hand to mouth. But they should at least be taught that, while they are engaged in this pursuit of amiable trifling, their real powers

of committing music to memory are rapidly deteriorating. There is always a *ne plus ultra* for studentship of this kind. It is a perilous form of amusement, fraught with particular danger to the mental life.

The scope of this book forbids an exposition upon the training of the memory. The reader must be content with a word of advice upon the preparation of compositions intended, subsequently, to be played by heart. The act of memorizing music must be correlated with the process of mental study just enjoined. It may, in fact, be said that mental study, in the sense here understood, is the first step towards the further power of holding musical thought permanently in the mind. It follows, therefore, that the attempt to memorize music which has not first been mentally grasped may be compared with building a house upon a foundation of sand. No base has been provided for the logical exercise of the memory; and, in consequence, the sole resource of the player is the encouragement of that physical or muscular form of memory which is as much the property of the ape as of the man.

When, however, the act of mental study has been applied to the music, the way lies open for the memorizing of the impressions formed. In general cases, the sequence of effort may be as follows:

(*a*) The mental study of a composition in the manner already set forth.

(*b*) The transference of the mental impressions to the instrument, this entailing a complete keyboard mastery of the whole.

(*c*) The memorizing of the mental and physical impressions received under (*a*) and (*b*).

The path is therefore quite clear before the competitor who wishes to play from memory. It should be understood, however, that, during the (*c*) stage, he must not fall back upon the physical or muscular memory as a means of help. He should, if possible, memorize the whole of the composition away from the instrument or, at least, refer to the keyboard only for the occasional trial of complex or of particularly difficult progressions. In this way he will build up a mental and aesthetic view of the music which, when the time of testing comes, will prove impregnable and impervious to every outward circumstance.

At the same time it is well to remember that, in their several needs and peculiarities, human minds differ greatly; as completely, for example, as flowers. That flower is sturdy and can be left to itself for germination and growth, this one needs a protecting glass at the slightest suspicion of cold. This bloom came naturally and without the gardener's help, that was brought into existence

by careful nourishment with suitable stimulants The counsels already given will serve for the stronger and more self-reliant students. There are those, however, who, to retain a clear mental image of music, require the stimulant which follows a larger number of repetitions at the instrument. No useful rules could be devised which would adequately meet the exigencies of each case ; but it is possible to adopt a helpful mental formula to the effect that the act of memorizing is an intelligent process in proportion to the success achieved in study apart from the instrument ; conversely, that in proportion as the memory derives its grip from repeated hearings or keyboard renderings of the music, so is its value as a mental effort correspondingly lessened.

Hence it is evident that competitors who propose to play without book should be careful to ascertain the exact position in which they stand with respect to mental grasp. There can be no reasonable doubt that, when the act of memorizing is a thoroughly mental process, to play from memory is a considerable advantage to the competitor. Although separate marks may not be awarded for the act itself, the resultant raising of the whole performance to a higher plane of effort cannot but be reflected in the scale of marks generally. Moreover, it is incontestable that the

visual grasp of notation should be little more than a passing experience. To eliminate the visual from the aural and tactual means the ultimate diversion of the mind to those things which are alone concerned with the making of conscious music.

We must turn to other aspects of the competitor's task. A fertile subject for discussion may be found in what may be called the problem of the nimble-fingered. Now, to be nimble-fingered is by no means the same as to be nimble-witted; on the contrary, the two things are rarely found together. There are players, frequently heard at competitive festivals, who appear to possess all the powers of keyboard agility save the one which discerns the real purport of swiftly moving sounds in the atmosphere of performance. Whether in a rapid Mozartian passage of decorative grace or in a Chopin-like arabesque, whether in the wild tumult of an overwhelming climax in the music of masters of deeper thought or in the impressionistic swirls of modern schools, the hearer is conscious of a dull level of nimbleness which, even if it possess the elementary recommendation of absolute clearness, is without the capacity to differentiate between mood and mood, between the emotional subtlety of one passage and, it may be, the rugged earnestness of another.

These are the people who rejoice in their power to run swiftly to and fro upon the keyboard. In the hey-day of their animal ardour, they mistake the means of performance for the act itself. Theirs is a veritable shadow of pianistic art. They glory in what they are pleased to term their ' technique,' and, all the time, are oblivious to the true technique of musical art which involves the perception of the message, its shaping and reproduction, as a personal communication of idealized thought between player and listeners.

At the risk of a charge of tiresome tautology, I am obliged to express the opinion that for players of this type there can be no salvation but that which they may find in the act of mental study. The keyboard skill which they possess will not be lessened by their submission to the claims of mentality ; on the contrary, it will be augmented by a process which, surely and thoroughly, will prove to them that all physical qualities in art must be subordinate to the necessities of that particular form of beauty upon which the thought of the artist-creator is based.

There is an ever-increasing number of competitors who, through faulty or utterly bad pedalling, fail to reach the position to which other features of their playing would seem to entitle

them. Some cases of the kind are undoubtedly due to the aforementioned malady yclept nervousness, but these are relatively few. Errors in pedalling often go through a whole class, like measles in a family. The best keyboard effort can be ruined by ignorance of the functions pertaining to the pedal, and it would seem as though this fact were but imperfectly realized by many young and promising performers. The results of bad pedalling may be tabulated as follows:

(*a*) Obstruction of the effects of phrasing.
(*b*) Blurring of melodic outlines.
(*c*) Mingling of antagonistic harmonies.
(*d*) Discontinuance of low bass-sounds integral to the harmonic structure.
(*e*) Ruin of all dynamic effects.
(*f*) Virtual negation of the instinct of clearness in musical expression.

This is a formidable list of possibilities, any one of which may be expected to materialize should a performance betray insufficient knowledge of the use of the pedal. It is, indeed, very singular that so few competitors, comparatively speaking, should show themselves equal to the task of intelligent pedalling. Many are avowed slaves to the usual indications found in the score. Thus far, it has passed the wit of composers and editors to devise more than the merest approximation towards

pedal directions, and it is not difficult to discover the reason. The damping efficiency as well as the damping level vary with each instrument; moreover, in the case of 'after' or so-called 'syncopated' pedalling, the complete notation required to indicate the 'on' and 'off' positions would seriously encroach upon the printed page.

These remarks tend to prove that the student needs technical exercises in the art of pedalling. He should realize that, though the contrary issue is the effect often obtained, the pedal is intended to clarify the musical thought during the moment of expression. Consequently, such exercises should take the form of progressions, played first without the pedal, and subsequently with pedal effects of various kinds. If competitors invariably gave as much attention to their pedal touch as they usually bestow upon their manual work, the improvement in their power of diction would appear miraculous.

There is one matter connected with the attitude of competitors at the instrument which demands far more attention than that ordinarily given to it. The habit of misusing the eye in performance is responsible for much incertitude in the act of keyboard self-expression. The general conduct of the player with reference to sound, notation, and

keyboard may best be indicated by the following formula :—

THE EAR FOR THE SOUND.
THE EYE FOR THE NOTE.
THE HAND FOR THE KEY.

If the advice to every ambitious performer should take the form of the familiar *Know thyself*, it is at least certain that the subject of next importance to one who has to handle so complex a medium as the keyboard should be *Know thy keyboard*. Yet, whatever may be said of the prevalence or non-prevalence of the first species of knowledge, it is always evident to an observant adjudicator that, to the large majority of competitors, practical knowledge of the keyboard is a minus quantity. The primary result of ignorance of the construction, octave system, and general alignment of the keyboard is that the eye is deflected from its native task of following the notation, double duty being necessarily demanded of it. It is not fair to the eye ; moreover, the incessant practice of looking alternately at book and keyboard has the distressing result of provoking a veritable genius of unrest and uncertainty both in diction and in general attack.

Not a few young players will probably contend that the charge of keyboard ignorance is a mere quibble on the part of a narrow-minded pedagogue.

To such it is easy to propose a test. Let them, while playing a familiar work or reading another *a prima vista,* contrive a means whereby they are unable to see the keyboard. A friend holding a piece of cardboard beneath the chin will meet the need. If, then, they be able to play *with the same mental and physical freedom* as when the keyboard lies within the range of the eye, the imputation may be withdrawn. If, however, they make the discovery, as will probably be the case, that a pronounced difference becomes apparent in their power to handle the keyboard, their course is clear: they must apply themselves to learn the contour and formation of their tool. For the keyboard is to the player as the chisel to the carpenter or the brush to the painter.*

It is probably true that the competitors who reap the greatest benefits from a Musical Competition Festival are those to whom, in the matter of endowments, Nature has not been particularly kind. This is just as it should be. How well I know them! In every other respect brave and

* In a book of this description, one is naturally loth to refer to other personal contributions to the needs of pianoforte students; but an exception may here be made, if only for the one reason that, as far as I know, in no other book will be found a series of exercises dealing with this subject. In my 'Centre-Points in Pianoforte Study' (Curwen and Sons), will be found a list of tests for self-discipline in the knowledge of the keyboard.

strong, they try to invest their performance with the same attributes; and it is extraordinary how often they reach within an ace of their objective. The experience braces all who struggle for success against odds of which they are probably too painfully conscious. There can be nothing but praise for such. Nor is it necessary to stint the praise. When one has a small nature, praise makes for conceit; but when the nature is great, it makes for responsibility. These are the great souls who come up, year by year, knowing their weaknesses, but hopeful that the day will dawn when their shackles shall be shattered and they themselves liberated from the bondage of natural limitations. To all competitors of the kind, every adjudicator of experience would say: Carry on. Do not let the shadow of discouragement cross your path. Your reward is sure!

On the other hand, there is an element of danger lurking for the naturally gifted and capable. The gaining of a prize at a festival has occasionally proved a small tragedy to the recipient. The temptation to early specialization has proved too strong for parent, teacher, or student, and the promise which seemed so alluring at the time of the award has, in the course of years, drifted ever farther and farther into the dim background of

the life. The question of specialization is one which, in the case of young and distinctively competent players, must be faced; and bravely faced. But the facing of the problem ought not to be the responsibility of those whose mental outlook is slight and casual; otherwise nothing is more certain than that, in the absence of the proverbially good luck which so often seems to preserve the irresponsible, a wrong decision will be made.

There may be an occasional argument for entire specialization. There are certainly one or two for a modest form of specialized study. In either case, however, the use of any argument would entail a prior recognition of general educational acquirement. There can be no argument for specialization in the case of a student whose mind is untrained in things other than musical. Music can be the first thing in a fully-stored and retentive mind. If it be made the first thing in an untrained or impoverished mind, the ultimate issue can rarely be but disappointment and tragic disillusion.

In conclusion, it is hardly necessary to say that every competitor in a pianoforte class should regard the test of skill from the highest possible point of view. He should think of his approach to the adjudicator as the coming to a friend who not

only wishes him well, but who will not hesitate to play the part of a friend, however seemingly caustic may be his observations upon the marking-sheet. He should put far from him every thought which does not savour of the atmosphere of true brotherhood and openness which is the invariable characteristic of every festival worthy of so suggestive a name. And, in this spirit, he will fall a willing captive to the muse; and, although he may fail to win a prize or even a certificate of merit, his will be the satisfaction which is the sure experience of all who serve the art of music with enthusiastic love.

CHAPTER IV

THE ADJUDICATOR

AMONG the qualifications for the important position of an adjudicator at a Musical Competition Festival, the greatest is an overwhelming love for the art of music. By such a love I do not mean the sentimentality of the self-enwrapped egotist who glories in the sense of personal executive achievement. On the contrary, the mind turns gratefully to the musician whose delight in music takes the form of an eager desire that he may be able to share his own joy with his fellows around him. There is no place in the Musical Competition Festival for an adjudicator who is not filled with missionary zeal for the cause of music. Indeed, it is more than possible that the value of the work done by an adjudicator is in exact proportion to the selflessness of the love he bears for the art.

Closely allied to this qualification is the love which every adjudicator ought to possess for the young. Perhaps, a sign of his fitness for his task

may be found in his consciousness of the greatness of the privilege in being called to listen to little children. At any rate it is in this sphere of his activities that he will have the finest opportunity of proving to the organizers of a festival that their choice of an adjudicator has been sound. It is given to many musicians to appraise the performance of great works by competitors of riper age; relatively, it is but few who possess that sympathetic insight which enables them to see within the child-mind and which leads them in the paths of helpful discrimination and pregnant comment.

The standpoint of some musicians, with reference to the music of very young children as well as of beginners generally, is probably an unconscious reflection of the attitude of parents towards the choice of a teacher for their children: 'She (or he) is only a beginner. Any kind of teacher will do!' At least, we know now that the child-beginner needs the best possible teaching that can be procured; and it is much to be regretted that our leading instrumental teachers do not more frequently unbend to the fascination of helping such on the pathway to music. A teacher who limits his energies to 'advanced' students is not only forfeiting a real joy, but is seriously circumscribing his knowledge and experience as a teacher. He knows but half, and that the lesser half of his

job. While I appreciate most thoroughly the work which is being done by prominent teachers in what, for the sake of comparison, may be called the higher ranks of pianism, I bow unreservedly and reverentially to the teacher who finds an even greater joy in giving the gentle 'push-off' to those who are at the initial stages of musical enterprise.

Here is the reason why helpful adjudicators upon the work of children and virtual beginners must, for the present, remain an unfortunate minority. Musicians, as a whole, require to be educated up to the needful point of discernment. They may be sufficiently trained in the sphere of personal performance, they may possess enough power to be of radical aid to the receptive and musically inclined; but, as the tree is known by its fruits, so must they, as teachers or as adjudicators, learn to abide by the judgment passed upon them with reference to their demeanour towards the strugglers, the immature or unfledged.

Another point arises from this line of thought. To be of solid and enduring help to the competitors at large an adjudicator must be a master of his subject. It goes without saying that he should be a musician in every sense of the word. The chief distinction of a musician is his capacity to appraise music, to the remotest detail, by the

sole use of his listening powers. A statement of this kind would almost seem to border on the humorous, were it not for the fact, unrealized by the world in general, that the power to listen to music divides easily into two branches. On the one side, there is that type of aural receptivity which accepts the progress of musical thought in a general sense ; on the other, that phase of idealized perception which virtually analyses the procession of ideas, the means employed and the method of reproduction, which collectively make up the sum of musical performance.

Unfortunately, it does not follow that a professed musician belongs necessarily to the second class of hearers. In parenthesis, it may be observed that this statement is made in all seriousness ! The arts of listening to music and of reproducing it by the act of personal performance are two widely different manifestations of musical activity. Until quite recently the training accorded to prospective musicians left wholly out of account the questions of aural capacity and development. It was assumed that the ear received a sufficient stimulus from the process of instrumental practice as well as from the habit of frequent concert-going. The result has been the creation of a race of teachers whose power to hear aright the thought of music is often in inverse ratio to their skill in

instrumental or vocal expression. This defect is being gradually remedied; but the effects of the past poverty of outlook will be felt for many a day, and, in a particular sense, by the musical laity who will be brought with difficulty to understand the ultimate reason for so great a reversal of educative practice.

If, however, the need be great for an aurally illuminated adjudicator, it is not less great in its demand for one who is a complete master of that part of musical activity upon which he is called upon to pass judgment. If, for financial or other apparently sufficient reasons, it be deemed necessary so to limit the number of adjudicators, that choral, solo singing, and instrumental competitors have to be distributed among them indiscriminately, the choice will probably fall upon those musicians who claim to be able to keep a benedictory eye upon every phase of musical industry. But this should not be the case with any festival which regards the educative side of the effort as its greatest asset. *Suus cuique mos* applies with equal force to most of the things of this world which call for more than absolutely inexperienced labour. It is quite certain that no one should be allowed to adjudicate upon pianoforte playing who has not himself been through the mill; and by going

through the mill, I mean that, at one time or another, he must have won his spurs as a player; further, that he must have had an extensive experience in the art of communicating power to other minds, particularly to those of average calibre. In brief, the pianoforte adjudicator should be able to get behind the actual effect produced, to discriminate aidfully in method and studentship, and, experimentally, to know the whole of the path trodden by each competitor.

The need for an adjudicator such as I have outlined becomes still more manifest when it is remembered, firstly, that he must be mentally capable of constructing an ideal rendering of each work submitted to his judgment; secondly, that he must possess the power to preserve the ideal throughout the numerous experimental efforts incidental to a long competition. The formation of an ideal of this kind is an antecedent necessity to an effort of intensive and concentrated listening, and no adjudicator should undertake his task without previous and thorough acquaintance with the music provided for each competition.

This leads one instinctively to discuss the element of enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is one of the inevitable issues of love, knowledge, and grip. An adjudicator should be buoyed upon a veritable

wave of fervour. It should be in his blood. It should be his sustenance during the mentally exacting work in which he is engaged. Moreover, beyond the enthusiasm which springs from his love for music and for the young, the obligation is laid upon him to be enthusiastic in the cause of competitive festivals generally. If he feel no devotion in this respect, he is most distinctly in the wrong place. He may be an accomplished and, for the immediate purpose, a highly suitable musician; but he will be the fly in the ointment. His words will carry no weight, his adjudications will be unconvincing. Better far, for himself as well as for competitors and festival, that he should decline the honour than, having accepted it, appear as the ghost at a banquet or a messenger of woe at a scene of revelry.

It is not yet adequately realized how essential to a well-equipped competitive festival is the provision of properly organized pianoforte classes. The gigantic strides made during the last decade or so in the cultivation of what, in the truest sense, may be called the musical instrument of the home is a sufficient warrant for the national interest in this most generally useful of all the means for making music. In not a few centres, the culminating if not the only feature of widespread public

concern is the more spectacular side of choral work. He would indeed be obtuse who would say aught against the exhilarating delights of concerted singing. It is, it must be, a prominent item in the curriculum of every festival. It is destined yet to do great and ever greater things in the cause of music. Nevertheless, work of this kind is not representative of daily effort in the privacy of the study. The adjudicator who descants upon choral singing is fully aware that he is addressing people who meet together at various intervals of time in mutual love for collective self-expression. He cannot, if he would, deal with them individually. He remembers that, in the main, their efforts depend upon the organization of rehearsals in which the individual is absorbed within the mass.

The adjudicator of the solo instrumental class has a very different experience. He knows that he is listening to the work of young people which has its origin in the daily round, not perhaps of drudgery in the exact sense of the word, but, at all events, of closely concentrated personal and private effort.

The respective attitudes of these two classes of adjudicators towards the competitors is therefore essentially diverse; and it is because of the particularly intimate nature of the work done by the

instrumental adjudicator that he may be regarded, not only as a necessary complement to the more general observation of his colleague, but as an indispensable helper in the programme of a comprehensive festival.

It is usually stated in the conditions of a competition that the adjudicator has the power to abridge the performance of a composition as well as to stop a competitor where he will. While this provision ought to be retained—it being obviously against the interests of all concerned to abbreviate the power of an adjudicator—it should be interpreted in the most liberal manner and as a power to be used only in the most extreme cases of necessity. It is against the public polity of the occasion to make cuts or to arrest poor performances. There are, in this connexion, two points which call for special observation on the part of all festival organizers and adjudicators.

Firstly, the abridgment of a movement may prevent a competitor from exhibiting the interpretative scheme formed during the hours of study. One simple example will make this perfectly clear. The psychology of the returning thought is one of the most interesting features of instrumental music. It may be connected with the wholly unexpected or with moments of conscious pre-

paration. The return may be at a point of emotional culmination or it may occur in an atmosphere of relative calm. It may be dealt with unheededly by the competitor or the manner of re-entry may enter largely into his conception of the movement. Should the player feel that a sudden signal from an irritating bell is a grim possibility, an element of disturbance is at once introduced which, not improbably, may affect his rendering to no slight extent. A composition is studied as a whole. The reproduction of the conception should also be heard as a whole.

Secondly, it should be recognized that competitors do not enter the lists for the sole purpose of obtaining a prize. Indeed, it is my own opinion that a very large number subject themselves to the test for the platform experience which it obviously entails. For the mass of students who compete a festival competition is the only opportunity which comes their way for a trial of their personal ability to perform in the presence of a critical audience. Moreover, not a few are anxious to obtain the remarks of a capable musician upon their powers of musical interpretation. Consequently, it may reasonably be concluded that many of these young people pay their entrance fees solely for the opportunity afforded. The same may also be affirmed of the very young

competitors, with the difference that they are subjected to the experience vicariously by their friends or teachers. To place a child in another atmosphere and to observe how it is influenced by the strange environment is often a great help to those who have the interests of the child at heart.

These considerations alone point to the desirability of allowing competitors to play their pieces from start to finish. Some adjudicators are of opinion that the saving of time which follows the stopping of undeniably weak players may, with perfect reasonableness, be given to the better observation of those who are strong. This, however, is scarcely fair to the former; honestly, it is not cricket. All should be given an equal chance, if only for the very pertinent reason that those who get most out of the experience are not, as a rule, the strong and confident but the weak and doubtful.

For these competitors, whom I have dubbed the weak and doubtful, a word ought here to be interpolated. Occasionally one meets an adjudicator who confesses frankly that he is almost unable to conceal his impatience with performances which betray entire ignorance of the primary essentials of pianoforte playing. It is probable that every adjudicator who has years of service to

his credit has, at one time or another and under similar conditions, lapsed into a trance-like state of boredom. There can be no words of blame for the very human slip from grace. It is merely an indication that the adjudicator has not yet got into his stride. The spirit of the whole adventure has not yet taken possession of him. In fairness, the weak competitor is as entitled to be heard as his stronger *confrère*; moreover, it is far from improbable that, if careful attention be given to his outstanding faults, some helpful words will subsequently fall from the adjudicator which may put new life into his efforts and throw an altogether different light upon his perplexities.

It is therefore evident that the time-table of a competitive festival should be arranged to permit of the adequate hearing of the music chosen for each competition. In adjusting the table it is not sufficient to calculate the time absorbed by one rendering and to multiply it by the number of competitors. A margin should be allowed for the interval between the close of one performance and the beginning of the next. Moreover, the question of punctuality is obviously involved. I am perfectly conscious that strict punctuality is an ideal rarely attained throughout a festival; but a tolerably long experience has proved to me

that an infinitely more cheerful spirit is invariably present when accurate time-keeping is the order of the day.

This matter of punctuality is one in which an adjudicator should be prepared to assume his share of responsibility. It is no answer to competitors and their friends, wearied with waiting for classes which get later and later as the day wears on, to observe that the fault is with the management. When obviously insufficient time is allowed, a measure of unpunctuality must ensue; but it is the duty of the adjudicator to keep his eye on the clock and, by every means in his power, to prevent further loss of time through inexpertness in the activities of his function.

In this particular it is virtually hopeless to attempt words of counsel to one's comrades in arms. Some excellent and well-tried adjudicators are slow in coming to their decisions and, moreover, are inclined to waste time between the various auditions. It is purely a matter of temperament, emphasized by their earnest desire to do the right thing in the case of every performer. When the fact is known by those in authority, provision should be made for the eventuality when arranging the programme. On the other hand, some adjudicators possess the faculty of arriving at almost instant decisions. Nevertheless, danger

may lurk in speed! It is quite certain that the latter type of adjudicator will be the more popular with organizers; provided always that, in weight and insight, his judgments rival those of his less swiftly moving colleague.

A question, distinctly related to the foregoing, may here be opportunely asked: Is it expedient to hold 'finals' at the close of a competition? Every experienced adjudicator must often have debated this problem with himself. It is of course obvious that to recall competitors is undesirable, if it can be prevented. Unfortunately, however, it is sometimes necessary, the margin between a few of the original renderings being so narrow that re-hearing is the only resource open to the adjudicator. The chief reason urged against a re-hearing is that the second rendering of a work may be less satisfactory than the first. The first effort of a competitor, so it is held, represents the culmination of a period of pent-up energy. When this has been spent, the time between the two performances is insufficient for the task of replenishment, of re-energizing; and, in consequence, the second effort loses much of the human touch with which it was at first invested.

This view of the case does not take into account one of the most healthy features of instrumental

study. It is undeniable that, in the case of some young people, the argument possesses not a little force. There are, however, two sides to the question. The performance of music is a climactic act, but progress in the art of playing is largely measured by the rapidity with which the human cells are capable of re-chargement after a recent expenditure of energy. Consequently it would be entirely logical were a double performance exacted, not from a few of the competitors but from all. Since, however, those actually selected for the final test are presumably the best among the performers, no unfairness is possible to those not thus selected; and since, also, the second test calls for a proof of endurance and of triumph over limitations other than strictly musical, the finalists have an added reason for gratification at their recall.

A word is now due to the adjudicator's address at the close of a competition. It is, of course, a *sine qua non* of his function that he should be able to express himself clearly and in an interesting and sympathetic manner; but there are other and equally important considerations to take into account.

In the first place, the remarks should arise wholly out of the competition. This is a sufficient reason for avoiding digressions which are generally

irritating to competitors and audience alike Further, the remarks should be of a general character and thoroughly impersonal. It is the fashion with some adjudicators to refer directly to the competitors. I do not myself consider this to be at all fair to them. The adjudicator, presumably, is a stranger in the district, and words which may fall from him with reference to this or that competitor may be misunderstood or misconstrued by some to whom the subjects of his observations are perfectly well known. There are such things as local friendships and local antipathies, and no adjudicator should desire to play the part of Providence to people whom he does not know and whom, in all probability, he will never see again. On the contrary, it should be the aim of every adjudicator who merits the name to leave behind him a sweet savour of remembrance as a *helper*. He will most surely carry out this ideal, not by apportioning praise or blame to individual players and thus directing the attention of the audience to a purely personal aspect of excellence or weakness, but by restricting his remarks to general defects which he may have observed in the course of the competition.

It does not lie within the moral province of an adjudicator to hurt the feelings of competitors or their friends by making satirical remarks upon the

performances. In the case of certain outstanding faults, a sharp word may occasionally be advisable, but rank irony is the refuge, not of an adjudicator, but of one who occupies a seat to which, to speak frankly, he is not entitled. Nor, on the other hand, should an adjudicator descend to trivial sentimentalities. A desire for popularity can be satisfied only by forgetfulness of the nature of his mission and vocation. The adjudicator should remember that, while he is addressing a festival audience, his sole object is to help, to encourage, and to inspire.

No adjudicator should allow himself to make depreciatory comments upon the music selected for a competition. The unwritten law of courtesy is as integral to the expression of opinion upon the public platform as to the advancement of personal views in private life. When the music chosen for a festival is considered generally to be of comparatively poor quality, the adjudicator should make the fact the basis of a strictly private report to the organizers. Under no conceivable circumstances should he refer to the subject in the course of his remarks from the chair of adjudication.

There is a strange diversity of opinion among adjudicators with reference to the ground or

grounds upon which a judgment should be based. A few words upon this part of the subject may, therefore, not be unwelcome. Here it is perhaps difficult to express personal views which contain no trace of the dictatorial and dogmatic; but, inasmuch as these remarks are primarily intended for the adjudicator new to his task, there can be no valid objection to the statement of opinions founded upon an experience of some years.

There are, of course, faults which instantly place a competitor outside the pale of possibility; such as, for instance, lack of power to control time-values, bad pedalling, inattention to the dynamics of performance, and the like. But, given that the fundamentals of healthy playing are present, what are the influences which should weigh most with a capable adjudicator?

An answer to this question must, to some extent, vary with the age of the competitors. In the case of little children, entire naturalness and ease of expression are the qualities most to be prized. Unfortunately it is not uncommon to hear renderings which have been literally pumped into children by their teachers. This, indubitably, is done at the cost of the child-nature, and its effect must often be to divert the child-mind from the contemplation of the beautiful in music to the purely artificial side of performance. This, therefore, is

one of the things to be reckoned with in the course of competitions limited to children.

Then we approach the problem of the 'halflings,' as they are called North of the Tweed. These are the boys and girls passing through the most critical years of youth. As a rule it is expedient not to expect signs of progress commensurate with their age. After having listened to a class of little children representative of the good teaching which is now happily often theirs, an adjudicator may make the not unnatural error of judging competitors of fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen years of age upon a proportionate basis of actual achievement. When he discovers that the standard of these particular classes is lower than he anticipated, he is inclined, if not to make sweeping remarks at the close, at least to regard it as indicative of a condition of lower effort in the district generally. This is a mistake founded upon a misconception of the part which music plays in the education of young people in their early teens.

It is popularly supposed that, after the first years of school-life are passed, boys and girls enter a phase which, as far as music is concerned, may be described as a period of slump. The little child, at first so receptive and teachable, is then presumed to lose every quality which originally fired the enthusiasm of the early teacher. It is a doleful

picture, and derives the vestige of truth which it appears to possess from the effect of the new life which opens up before the young during the second decade of their existence. It is the extreme novelty of this life, its call to duty, its insistence upon regularity, the mental pressure, the multiplicity of subjects which claim attention, the struggle to maintain a footing in the school of rivalry, which is responsible for the apparent deadness of the imaginative faculties of many children at this momentous time of their lives.

Further, music can be only one of many things to young people of this age; nor, indeed, can it ever be the thing of greatest moment, not even when the bane of precocity casts its invitatory shadow over the path of the young. Then, if at any time, is the moment for caution. Then is the opportunity to avoid the crime which ends in a professed musician bereft of the intellectual stamina denied him by the misplaced adoration of the friends of his youth.

These considerations should be deemed of sufficient weight to justify the exercise of scrupulous care in dealing with classes of the ages just mentioned. While it is not in the least necessary to condone bad or weak work, it is possible to allow one's sense of observation to be swayed by pertinent facts in the lives of competitors, the realization of

which makes all the difference to the formation of sane and sympathetic judgments.

In particular, an adjudicator should avoid the enticing error which, in these same classes, contrasts the performance of capable young players with that of others less favoured by nature or by circumstance. It is the age of discouragement; moreover, so much is at stake in the pursuit of music by the young. An unthoughtful word or still more unthoughtful jest may do infinite harm in the direction of irremediable disheartenment.

In the case of elder competitors or those who enter for the gold medal and higher classes generally, adjudication is an altogether different matter. Here the adjudicator may sit enthroned, if he wish, in all the panoply of justice. If he be a wise adjudicator, he will not permit his sense of humour to desert him; nor, because he has become an inflexible and unbending judge, will he forget the essentials of sympathy and humanity which are among the true insignia of his calling. At the same time, he will exact a high standard of excellence from those who have reached an age at which a moderate form of specialized study may have become a desirability.

It is as well to be quite clear with respect to the nature of the standard anticipated from prize-winners of the higher grades. That the standard

is not one of mere correctness is, of course, evident. On the other hand, the instinct of accuracy must be permitted to exert its due weight; that, and no more. Again, the standard is not one which relates to pure studentship. This may be of impeccable merit. It may be revealed in the balanced and well-poised phrase, in dynamic perception, in the outlining and rhythmic portrayal of every thought. All these things, like accuracy itself, will, of necessity, affect the judgment of the adjudicator; nevertheless, they will not in themselves provide a sufficient base for the purest form of discrimination.

It is at this point that adjudicators of pianoforte playing frequently fall into the common error of idealizing the means employed of communicating the message of music. It is the greatest possible temptation to give fuller credit to perfectness of keyboard manipulation than to the delivery of the message *per se*.

To deliver the message of music is, then, the problem before the performer, and the realization of this truth is the key to a musicianly judgment on the part of the adjudicator. The word *interpretation* is, in these days, much used with reference to the expression of musical thought. It is not necessary to quarrel over a question of terminology —particularly when the word under discussion is

actually descriptive of the idea—but many sins are being committed in its name, and the time has come to protest against the prevalent over-teaching in the sphere of pure interpretation which artificializes the rendering of music and, not infrequently, reduces it to a condition of emotional sterility. By rule or by precept, by the application of subtle forms of imitation or by a veritable deification of analysis, a musical composition is brought before an adjudicator with a perfection of detail so complete that, if he be not on his guard, an unfortunate miscarriage of judgment may be the result.

What, then, is interpretation? It is a question which every adjudicator should be at the utmost pains to settle for himself. Interpretation is the outward portrayal of inward thought. It is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Interpretation is dominated by two forces integral to all intelligent human life: (*a*) Imagination; (*b*) Personality. It is the province of the imagination to fill the mind with healthy visions and, in conjunction with the faculty of memory, to store up mental pictures out of which grow all the possibilities of idealized enterprise. It is the province of personality to be the medium through which the ideas, conjured into being by the imagination, are presented to the world. Progress in the outward reproduction of music should,

therefore, be measured by the development of the power native to personality to make clear the emotional conceptions formed by the imagination. Personality may be regarded as the filter through which the ideas born in the imagination are purified during their passage from one mind to another. For the full exercise of its power, personality depends upon the sanity, cleanness and vigour of the mental life. Apart from personality, imagination would be prone to run riot in unhealthy and forbidden paths. Held in check by the knowledge that its most secret thoughts may be revealed by personality, imagination falls into its rightful position as the stimulating grace of human life.

It is easy to apply these truths to the task of the adjudicator. It is for him to discover how far the rendering of each competitor is the outcome of personal thought and initiative. It is for him to differentiate between the highly finished example, book-learnt or imitatively-acquired, of artificial interpretation and a delivery of the musical message which is the manifest offspring of imaginative thought filtered through the magic of personality.

There will be times when the judgment tends to oscillate between rival claims of excellence. It is so easy to give priority of place to a keyboardist of unexceptionable skill. It may even be the line

of least resistance. But the true adjudicator will look higher. He will search for those interpretative qualities which no form of imitative teaching can ever communicate, and which owe their existence to a personality fortified by character. Renderings of this kind are comparatively rare, but they can be heard at some festivals; and, to those who have the ears to hear and the mind to understand, they offer an experience of unalloyed delight.

It is impossible to conclude this chapter without a reference to the comradeship in effort which distinguishes so many of the adjudicators of to-day, and, in particular, to their invariable willingness on all occasions to show the hand which brought them success. There can be but few occupations which so thoroughly eliminate the elementary selfishness in man as the position of an adjudicator at Musical Competition Festivals. There can be none which more effectually removes a musician from his pedestal and brings him into touch with manifestations of musical energy of which he would otherwise have been profoundly ignorant. That every adjudicator, whatever his rank in the estimation of mankind, owes much to the festival movement cannot be questioned. He may be the most expert of teachers, he may be qualified to deal with the most abstruse points of musical

erudition; but, whatever his skill or prescience, the chair of adjudication will find him discovering many an unlearned lesson and many a lesson which has to be learned anew. That musicians generally are beginning to recognize the real value of the work done by the Musical Competition Festival is one of the healthiest signs in the world of music. It follows hard upon the comparatively recent developments in the teaching of the art. In all probability the two things are intimately connected.

CHAPTER V

THE SELECTION OF MUSIC

GREAT names are often like charity; they cover a multitude of sins. Not every poem written by Wordsworth is fine poetry. Not everything composed for the pianoforte by Beethoven is necessarily interesting music. Herein is wisdom for those who undertake the responsibility of selecting test-pieces for the various classes of a Musical Competition Festival. This question of selection is no light matter. It is dependent upon so many conditions: the suitability of those called to the duty, their general experience of music, their power to select compositions of sufficient stamina to attract audience and interest competitor.

The adjudicator is sometimes asked to select the music for each competition judged by him. There may be occasions when this is desirable; but, in a general way, the request should be regarded as *infra dignitatem* on the part of those who make

it. It is not one of the least advantages of a musical festival that the educative force diffused by it may be made to stretch far beyond the actual area of competition. All who are brought into contact with the festival spirit should partake of its benefits. The holding of a festival implies the existence of a desire that a greater knowledge of music shall be the ultimate outcome in the place of its celebration. Surely, then, those who engineer the cause should possess sufficient confidence in themselves and in their capacity to prepare the whole of the material fundamental to the occasion.

There is, however, another point of view to be considered. The duty of selecting music for competitive purposes is no sinecure. It calls for not a little insight and, possibly, for yet more experience. It may be that these qualities are occasionally felt to be wanting among organizers and their colleagues. The modesty of the attitude is commendable, but the problem is not solved by placing the burden upon other shoulders. Moreover, it is a great loss to the musicians who have promoted a competitive festival to forfeit so obvious an opportunity for developing a wider musical outlook.

There can be no reasonable doubt that the selection of music should be undertaken by a small committee of musicians appointed solely for the purpose. This opinion may be expressed

emphatically, despite the manifest drawbacks which present themselves from time to time. If a festival is to fulfil every purpose of its being, it must, among other things, influence the music in the lives of all around. Musicians, for instance, are too prone to take a patronizing interest in a festival. Occasionally they will attend competitions to listen to their own students or to the students of other teachers; but they are often slow to realize that, in a very particular sense, the occasion is one for heart-searching and self-examination in the case of every teacher in the district. This line of thought leads naturally to a conception of the part which should be played by all local musicians and teachers who are actively engaged in the work of a festival. Short of the actual task of adjudication, every other detail relative to the purely musical side of the work should be arranged by these same musicians and teachers—manifestly, to their great musical advantage. It is evident that the selection of music falls within this category of effort.

The duties of a music selection committee may be summed up as follows:

(*a*) The provision of test-music of the first rank.

(*b*) Reference to the various grades of keyboard skill (popularly known as *technique*) expected at the respective ages.

(*c*) Attention, on the ground of age, to the emotional range of the music.

(*d*) The provision of music characterized by variety of diction.

These may now be dealt with *seriatim*.

(*a*) The provision of music of the first rank reminds us of the educative purpose of a Musical Competition Festival. The foundation of all healthy musical appreciation lies in a thorough acquaintance with the 'classics' of the art. The present tendency to forget or to ignore this truth ought to be rigidly suppressed. The music of the pianoforte has literally got out of hand. Many remarkable writers are speaking to us through the medium of the instrument and revealing novel forms of expression, novel phases of diction, which, not unnaturally, are infecting the young with the idea that the music of the older masters is archaic, old-fashioned and unresponsive to the enthusiasm of youth. Now, a musician may be keenly alive to and wholly appreciative of many of the modern manifestations of music; but, if he possess experience and judgment, he will be the first to acknowledge that the development of his appreciation upon the later lines of musical art is due to a firm grip upon the best that has been done by the best writers of the past. There has been, there is, there can be, no golden age of pianoforte com-

position. From the earliest days of this phase of music, the story is one of continual expansion; and the modern composer, with his strange and often mystic idioms, with his experiments in colour and rhythm, is, at his best, a logical successor to those whose art prepared the way for him. Hence it is a natural deduction that real and lasting appreciation of the more modern aspects of music can be the issue only of a comprehensive knowledge of pianoforte literature in general.

It is for this reason that, when the age of the competitors renders it possible, the selection of test-pieces should be made from among the writings of pre-modern composers. Departures from this rule could be regulated by the general spirit of the ordinance. A festival with many pianoforte classes, for instance, could afford to distribute the two types of music, the pre-modern and the relatively modern, among them indiscriminately. The bias, however, should be in the former rather than in the latter direction. Youth is the time to cover the ground as a prelude to the higher appreciation of art. If young people are not brought into touch with the classics while they hover between school-days and the later life of freedom, the opportunity, in all probability, passes for ever.

There are many sides to the question of selection. One has perforce to consider the audience.

I remember the performance of a composition which consisted of a study upon chromatic scales, and shudder at the remembrance. On the other hand, the competitors also call for consideration. It is sheer folly to offer them stones when they cry for bread. They have to do the work day by day, and it is asking too much from human nature to expect that patience and resignation will compensate for the lack of loveliness and of intellectual profit in the music given to them for preparation. One remembers Grieg's protest at the action of a master who gave him 'a loathsome Sonata by Clementi.' Many may not agree with the use of the adjective in connexion with the music of a man who, in his day, did good service for the pianist's art; but, if we look for them, it is possible to find examples of a strangely repellent character in some of the music of the greatest masters. This does not detract from their glory. It merely marks them as subject to momentary infirmities which they mistook for inspiration.

A very pertinent responsibility attaches to the selection of music for children. But a few years ago, one would have gone abroad—as a matter of fact, one *did* go abroad—to supply the need. It was never necessary to go there for the purpose; no more necessary, in fact, than the former habit of trudging off to Germany to study pianoforte

playing. It was merely the fashion to eschew anything written by one who, in these peculiar circumstances, had the ill luck to bear a British name. The pendulum is now swinging in the opposite direction. Perhaps political considerations have helped the good cause. However that may be, it is at least certain that the modern British school of children's music is now easily the first in the world. There is no other comparable with it. Further, the quantity of it is unstinted. There would seem to be a veritable frenzy of desire on the part of our native composers to furnish that which, all the world over, has been so singularly lacking in the past—good, healthy, and rhythmically interesting music for little children.

Here, then, is another duty for the music selection committee of a competitive festival. They must select all the music for children of the youngest classes from the works of native composers; further, they will do this, not for patriotic motives, but because the material from which they make their choice is the best that can be procured. Nevertheless, care must be exercised. They are not all Israel, which are of Israel. There is more than a sprinkling of goats among the sheep. The 'pretty tune,' for instance, is far less attractive to children than is commonly supposed. The play of figures upon a simple harmonic foundation is

greatly more to their fancy. The pretty tune goes hand in hand with the sugary verses formerly presumed to appeal to children. Greater far is the rhythmed nursery rhyme—dear alike to kiddies and to grown-ups—and its frequent counterpart in the juvenile music of to-day.

One important matter with respect to selection must not pass unnoticed. Pianoforte transcriptions or arrangements of music written for other instruments, for combinations of instruments or for voices, should never on any account be chosen for a competition. A fashion has recently been set by one or two publishers who issue works of this kind without announcing the fact boldly on the title-page. It is an indefensible mode of publication, and one which will react upon the heads of those who practise it. In the case of published music, it is impossible to be too clear as to its nature and purpose. Here, also, it is evident that to be wary is another of the duties which devolve upon the members of a music selection committee.

(*b*) The three types of competitor—the little child, the 'halfling,' and the more mature student—call for particular attention with reference to the range of keyboard skill respectively demanded of them. A prizewinner is not necessarily the

player with the greatest command over the keyboard; and the fact should rule out the constantly recurring presumption that success will go to the performer whose technique—using the word in the limited sense—is the most brilliant.

The truth of the matter may most easily be arrived at by remembering that the three types just referred to roughly represent three stages in the path of the growing pianist. The first—or the stage of the little child—is an era of comparative freedom. It is the stage when the little hand is finding its way about the keyboard. It is the stage of topography, the stage when the reproduction of musical ideas is limited to the easiest keyboard forms. At this period of effort, the difficulties of reading the score, of controlling the simple time-values with accuracy, loom in the child-mind much more forcibly than the physical treatment of the keyboard.

In the second stage, we come into contact with those who are supposed to have made such progress in reading notation that more attention may be given to the problem of the keyboard. Yet, at this period of growth, mere keyboard difficulty ought not to be stressed. There is a tendency to present to young people of this stage music which requires a larger experience of the keyboard than time or circumstances usually allow them to

acquire. In consequence, the conquest of physically perplexing passages occupies time which should be given to their general development in musicianship. It is, of course, impossible that actual keyboard power can be entirely relegated to the background; but it is possible to exaggerate its efficacy as a salutary means of musical development. At this time of their lives, competitors, as a rule, can give but scant time, relatively speaking, to pianoforte study. That is, at least, true if they are being properly educated; and no Musical Competition Festival should be guilty of tempting parents and teachers to allow young people to forsake the common round and daily task, and, if only for the moment, to indulge in the fallacious delights of a shallow form of specialism.

Competitors who belong to the third stage are presumed to have acquired much of the art which correlates ear, eye, and hand in the service of pianoforte playing. Further, they have attained a sufficient age to ponder over the advantages and disadvantages of specialized study. Accordingly, the adjudicator will view the keyboard possibilities of these elder competitors in a very different light; and, for the purpose of helpful judgment, will expect that the works chosen shall be of such a nature that they afford an opportunity of exhibiting the practical results of keen study.

The chief danger in the selection of music for competitors of the third stage arises from a desire to provide music in which an exhibition of pure keyboard display is the prevailing characteristic. Solicitude for the audience seems to be at the back of the wish, but it is a solicitude with no background of justification. There is perhaps no display of physical activity which palls so soon as that connected with a certain type of pianoforte playing. The continued repetitions of an unsubstantial though brilliant piece cannot develop the faculty of musical appreciation; on the contrary, it is far more likely to beget a sense of *de*preciation.

(*c*) The emotional side of music is, of course, one of its most precious assets. Nevertheless, an observation of most great music will show that the mental faculties are engaged in approximately equal measure. In true pianoforte playing a correlation exists between the physical, mental, and emotional which is probably without a parallel in the whole realm of human activity; and the fact indicates the exceeding value of properly balanced pianoforte study to the young. Perfect correlation between the three parts of the human make-up, however, is the result of much experience. It cannot exist in the very young, it is but dimly present in the 'halfling,' it reaches the stage of

possibility only when the student is on the verge of early manhood and womanhood.

Consequently, in its appeal to the emotional life, the music adapted for practical study at the different ages of development varies greatly in content as well as in degree. During the early years of study, the appeal of music to the student *while at the keyboard* is very largely, and often entirely, mental. The young player is so occupied with the novelty of the language, the newness of the means and tools of his craft, that emotion halts in patient waiting for the advent of more power of expression. The fact lends weight to the argument that music which calls for a wide range of emotional insight should be withheld from those as yet physically incapable of playing it apart from extensive keyboard practice.

Music for little children should bear the same relation to the music of emotion that the fairy tale bears to the literature of maturity. Music for those of somewhat riper years, though still within the magic circle of early youth, should emphasize the mental side of the art rather than the emotional.

Music in which the emotional rivals or surpasses the mental should be reserved for students who are capable of reproducing their sensations in a comparatively spontaneous manner.

(*d*) It is important that the composition selected for a competition should exhibit a wide range of musical variety. It is quite common to hear examples of good music in which this provision is entirely absent. Music of this kind is often musically alive and interesting, but proves a formidable barrier to serviceable adjudication. The compositions actually selected should contain distinctly diverse thoughts which open up possibilities of happy contrast in expression. Works which depend upon the continual repetition of an organic figure should be excluded. The qualities most to be desired are opportunities for dynamic shadings, freedom of rhythmic delineation, and, it may be added, an avoidance of banalities of expression suggestive of the tawdry and sentimental.

The task before a music selection committee is therefore an onerous one. Frankly, it is impossible honestly to approach it save only with a sense of weighty responsibility. It is not to be taken in hand as a mere side-issue; on the contrary, it is an integral part of the educational activities which form the ultimate *raison d'être* of every happily conceived festival. In brief, it is essential that the committee should be representative of the best musical thought in the district, and that the members should realize that upon their action

depends in no small measure the educational efficiency of their festival.

Probably the best of all reasons for keeping high the standard of music performed at a competitive festival is concerned with the question of public taste. We have been called an unmusical nation, and it is indisputable that a friendly observer from another land would find much to condemn in the popular strains of many a place of public entertainment. We have to remember that the material from which the art of music is fashioned lends itself easily to the propagation of showy, shallow, and sentimental effusions; further, that these bear the same relation to music, the art, as doggerel to poetry or daubing to painting. It is an unfortunate truth that the education of the average man does not, as a rule, enable him to appreciate the difference in the case of music, and it is, therefore, all the more imperative that, during the years in which the impressions of life are founded, the young should be helped to hear as much as possible of the real side of the art.

Need it be added that these considerations point to a brilliant opportunity for every Musical Competition Festival in the land?

CHAPTER VI

COMPETITIONS VERSUS EXAMINATIONS

MUSICALLY regarded, it would appear that we are the most examined people on the surface of the globe. The point affords much food for reflection. Has the privately conducted examination in pianoforte playing, for instance, fulfilled the high hopes which were formed by its promoters? Has it brought light to districts in which the flame of music had scarcely begun to glow? Has it made for enduring progress and fuller enthusiasm in the general things of music? Has it, in brief, been a means of developing skill on the part of teachers and knowledge on the part of students?

The time has come when questions such as these call for carefully thought out answers. There was undoubtedly a time when, by bringing young people into touch with good music, the syllabus of an examination supplied a great need. In dark corners of the land where the names of Bach and Beethoven rivalled those of Gog and Magog in

obscurity, the syllabus was of enormous help to teachers in selecting suitable and educational music for their students. But that time is past. Of late years, there has been a wonderful renaissance of musical activity in every part of our land. Easier means of communication and of intercourse, a more enlightened press and, above all, a growing consciousness of the educative worth of music have, one and all, contributed to this foretaste of greater things to come.

Nevertheless, while in this movement the musical examinations of the past must be held to have taken a distinguished part, it is time that we realized their steadily growing inefficiency in the light of the musical progress of to-day. Much water has flowed beneath the bridge of musical education since the inception of examination schemes. It is time to look at the foundations. Is it not possible that they may have become insecure, undermined, unstable? The passage of the stream has been swift and turbulent. Is it not therefore reasonable to presume that the piers are less firm, the buttresses less unyielding? Let us drop the language of metaphor and ask, plainly and succinctly, whether the law of development is to be regarded as applying to every department in the sphere of music save to that embraced within the area of examinations.

It is the special function of an examining body to move with the best thought of the age. For obvious reasons, it is not expected that such a body will anticipate thought. That is the particular prerogative of pioneers in the work of research. It *is* expected, however, that, when new thought has been accepted by men and women of sufficient authority as a step higher in the economy of life, that particular phase of thought will be reflected in the syllabuses issued for examinations.

It is here that we feel painfully the pressure of hard and unpalatable facts. As yet no examining body has had the courage to face the ultimate issues involved, for example, in the new thought of to-day upon the aural side of musical education. It is true that certain changes have been made in various syllabuses, but the sole result so far achieved has been to acknowledge the fundamental necessity of aural insight, and yet to make no provision for an adequate penalty in the case of its absence.

Consequently, in spite of the crowds of young people whose names fill the lists of successful candidates, it would appear that the private instrumental examination is not doing the useful, educative and beneficent work which ought to be the outcome of all the devotion lavished upon it by

capable and painstaking examiners. As at present constituted, it is not a test of musicianship, as ought to be the case with all effort of the kind, but primarily a trial of efficiency in musical performance. It is this very attribute which has raised up the Musical Competition Festival, a movement which may ultimately prove to be its fiercest rival.

It is quite certain that the thought of competition or rivalry with schemes of pure examination never occurred to the projectors of musical festivals. Themselves, they felt to be on different grounds, making their appeal for support to those of public spirit and wide sympathies. The Musical Competition Festival, however, has grown far beyond the wildest dreams of its originators. It is spreading its wings ever more energetically. It is reaching to the farthest corners of the land and influencing young people, as well as their elders, in a manner which will remain for ever impossible to the academic examination. It will be worth the pains to contrast the respective features of both forms of musical test.

In the first place, the musical festival is a public concern. Every competitor knows that he or she will enter the lists in full view of an interested audience. For an examination, privacy is almost an essential feature; but, for a test of skill in

performance, an audience is a veritable touchstone of inspiration. Here, there can be no doubt of merit or demerit as between competitor and competitor, no question of the standard actually reached, no misgivings on the score of unfairness or limitation of opportunity. All is in full view. A spirit of exhilaration is in the air. The purely scholastic is lost in the atmosphere of artistry, the introspection of the individual in the sense of external sympathy and co-operation.

Secondly, the much-talked-of question of standard is obliterated. It does not cross the path of the competitive festival. The standard of the competitions is a variable quantity and is set, not by the adjudicators or organizers, but by the competitors themselves. Rigidity of standard is a necessary ideal in connexion with the private examination. Flexibility of standard is a grateful issue of the festival competition, tempered by the musical tone of each district as well as by the atmosphere invariably evoked by healthy rivalry and good comradeship.

Thirdly, while the private examination is an influence which affects the individual candidate only, the Musical Competition Festival is an all-embracing experience altogether alien to the necessarily narrower associations of the examination room. The public character of the test is a valuable

factor which teaches the virtue of unselfishness in performance. To be public spirited in the pursuit of art is one of the greatest of all lessons to budding players and singers. Musical students are far too prone to hide their light under the bushel and, presumably under the influence of that fear of which I have already spoken or of a not always intelligible form of modesty, to keep the power which possesses them to themselves. In either case the effect is to develop a subtle phase of selfishness which is the antithesis to openness, courage, and *esprit de corps*. In the Musical Competition Festival the student finds a refuge from the devitalizing influence of musical self-absorption. The experience helps him to appreciate that greatest of truths in the art-life: that joy reaches its zenith only when it is shared with others. 'Happiness was born a twin.'

Fourthly, any scholastic benefits which may follow candidature in an examination are restricted to the individual. Those which flow from a festival competition are shared in by all present. Every rendering is a lesson to every member of the audience. To listen to twenty, thirty or more performances of the same composition is the most liberal of lessons in the art of interpretation. No other occasion in the world of music affords so magnificent an opportunity for applying the

instinct of comparison, not in a critical spirit, though this is obviously not excluded when it is exercised sympathetically, but as a means of cultivating the personal power of each interested auditor in the sphere of musical diction. To take a serial ticket at a Musical Competition Festival, and to attend as many competitions as possible, is an investment which yields an untold harvest of musical experience.

Fifthly, any rivalry which may exist among the candidates of a private examination is confined to those who happen to be friends or acquaintances; moreover, such rivalry is deprived of much of its climactic force by the enforced privacy of the test. On the other hand, the rivalry among the competitors of a musical festival is an experience which is keenly felt as a spur to effort. The openness of the competitions leads insensibly to a spirit of camaraderie, to the frank interchange of good wishes cordially expressed and as cordially reciprocated. At its highest the Musical Competition Festival invites those who have lacked what is commonly termed the sporting spirit to come within the magic circle of the generous minded; at its lowest it can never be a refuge for jealousy or for narrowness of outlook.

It is possible that the reader may be inclined

to rank me with the pessimists who are for ever railing against examinations as unnecessary disturbances in the general work of musical education. While I am in agreement with these as regards their implication that an examination ought to be a conserving and amalgamating influence in the life of the examinee, I should be the last to propose the abolition of responsibly conducted examinations in music. But it is one thing even to venture upon such a proposal and quite another to suggest that, in the light of the lesson taught by the Musical Competition Festival, the exact function of the musical examination may itself need to be closely examined. At present the examining bodies and the competitive festivals are running side by side with no clear indication of the differences between their respective claims upon the musical public. Each phase of effort is recognized as based upon altruistic principles of goodwill, but the value in either case to the student is an unstated and, to a large extent, an unverified quantity. The thousands of musical students who enter for examinations and for competitive festivals have a right to understand whether the aims of both forms of test be identical, and whether success in the one be an ample reason for abstaining from all participation in the other. It is an interesting inquiry and of more than purely topical concern.

Perhaps the whole matter at issue may be summed up by the remark that the Musical Competition Festival is a test of practical efficiency in performance; the examination, of attainment, in the realm of pure musicianship. The differentiation is of course open to attack. Why—it will be asked—should the two sides of musical culture be separated? Why should the fact of musical performance be divorced from the still greater fact of musicianship? Why may it not be assumed that the power to perform music effectively carries with it the presumption that it is musicianship, and musicianship alone, which prompts the interpretative sense?

To the undisciplined in music there is no possible answer to these questions; that is to say, no answer which will effectually clear away the misgivings which the asking of them may arouse. It is an old problem; as old, indeed, as the time when man first discovered the duality of significance which underlay his slightest mental effort. Applied to music in general, it means that the art of the life within is the mainspring of all activity in the art of the life without, and that the value of the art in the life without depends entirely upon the development of the art in the life within. Applied to musical performance, it means that, intellectually and emotionally, the

art of the performer is, or should be, gauged by the quality and extent of his experience in the subjective intaking of musical impressions.

It is therefore not difficult to perceive why many a performer whose power at the keyboard is manifestly great should, when subjected to an efficient test, betray an abysmal ignorance of the nature and meaning of his art. Surely, it may be thought, so serious a limitation is bound to be reflected in his playing. Avowedly, this ought to be the case; but it is just at this point that the teacher steps in. It is easy to visualize a teacher who, having adopted a line of least resistance, applies himself to the occupation of turning out capable keyboardists with no further thought in his mind than the conquest of keyboard difficulties and the formation of artificial habits of uninspired interpretation. It is a teacher of this kind who takes in hand the student who desires to play, but whose mind is vacant of all ambition to know the inner secrets of the world Beautiful. Thus, by perseverance and indulgence in the artifices of imitation, the inevitable result materializes—the creation of a host of young performers who, by daily insistence upon the outward side of music, have lost all desire for inward illumination.

We may blame the teachers. It may even be within the bounds of reason so to do. But may

it not be possible to place a far larger portion of the blame upon the shoulders of the examining bodies? Have they not played into the hands of those who see nothing in the culture of music save executive display? By practical abstention from tests of musicianship, adapted to the various ages or standards, have they not put back the clock of progress, it may be for generations? We may cudgel the teacher as we will; but the original blame is not his. The majority of teachers in this country are compelled to enter their students for examinations; and, to get the results which professionally they often sorely need, they have to submit themselves strictly to the rigorous precepts of the syllabus which tells them what to do and, inferentially, what not to do.

It is eminently probable that the transformation of the private examination into a true test of musicianship would have been still further delayed but for the coming of the Musical Competition Festival. The organizers of public competitions are virtually able to say to the directing agents of examinations: 'We do not dispute your right to test the playing power of students of music, but our method of procedure enables us to accomplish this far better than is possible to you. Our audiences offer unrivalled opportunities for appraising the value

of personal performance. Our system gets rid of the weak features of academic routine and substitutes something infinitely more invigorating in their place.'

It is necessary only to think for a moment to realize that these pretensions are founded upon sheer common sense. The appeal to the instinct of pure sportsmanship is one which never fails when it is made in honesty and good fellowship. Consequently it would seem that, when the idea is firmly established in the minds of the British public—a contingency probably not so remote as may be supposed—the competitions of the musical festivals will rank as the best possible of all means for testing performance.

What, then, is to become of the privately conducted examination? At length, it will arrive at its full stature as an ameliorating influence in the work of teachers throughout the land. In other words, it will be changed into a test of the progress made by each candidate in musical discernment, listening power, and aural discrimination. It will be useful to sketch a few of the potentialities which lie open to enterprise in the examinations of the future. Since the pianoforte student is uppermost in our minds, the following general prophecies may be regarded from his particular point of view.

The examination of the future will place the aural side of training in the forefront of its propaganda and the highest marks will therefore be given for it. This part of the subject will naturally be divided into two sections. The first will deal with ear-tests of chords, intervals, scales, and general sound relationships; the second, with the listening function applied to actual music. The latter will doubtless consist of answers to questions put by the examiner after he has played a short composition.

The examination of the future will sedulously attend to the visual grasp of notation. The so-called sight tests given at present will be replaced by devices far more calculated to ascertain the real progress made in the reading of music and in the correlation of ear and eye. It will be recognized that, in the grasp of musical characters, eye-power and eye-speed are not necessarily musical acquirements, and measures will accordingly be taken which will enable the examiner to differentiate between the display of innate or non-acquired facility and the presence of patiently developed knowledge.

The examination of the future will place the application of the tactual sense to pianoforte playing among the last of its requirements. Nevertheless, it will not think lightly of this phase of

study. It will be fully conscious that the plastic years of early youth afford the finest opportunity for acquiring good habits of muscular management. Consequently it will insist upon the formation of these habits; and, although actual music will not necessarily be excluded from the programme, the real tests will be those which illustrate the daily exercise given to the arm, hand and fingers by prescribed passages suited to the exemplification of each department of muscular technique.

It is at once evident that the proper place and, possibly, the only place for the tests just outlined is the examination room. They are emphatically tests of the method pursued in study, of the daily use of the means for acquiring insight as well as knowledge. They may be described as tests of studentship as distinguished from those of key-boardship. Healthily inaugurated and intelligently carried out, they would teach the world of studentry that, however responsive and agile the demonstration of muscular principles, failure in the aural and visual departments would mean failure also in the tactual part of the examination. It is a lesson which, more than any other, the present age of pianism needs to learn—and to learn thoroughly.

It is a necessary issue of these reflections that the Musical Competition Festival and the examination must be regarded as working side by side for two perfectly distinct purposes. The line of division, it is true, is not yet properly demarcated, but the fault does not lie with the festival movement. When the examining bodies rise to their privileges as missionaries in the cause of musical education, they will see that their form of enterprise is not antagonistic, but is actually complementary, to the work of the competitive festivals. They are primarily concerned with the progress of musicianship. They are overseers watching, not for the spectacular or for the advent of prodigies, but for the assessment of values in those items of studentship which collectively form the well-equipped musical mind. In brief, their interests lie solely in the work of education.

This differentiation illuminates the task before the Musical Competition Festival. It cannot delve into every corner of the student-life or subject each competitor to a catechism upon the inner verities of music. It can take account of the abstract virtue of musicianship only so far as it is revealed during the act of performance. To these extents, it is limited as a purely educational adventure. But, as a means of testing the value of the actual playing power of musical students,

it is unrivalled in scope as well as in opportunity. It is given to no possible form of private examination so radically to prove the moral, mental, emotional, imaginative and physical powers of the performers who enter the lists of a competitive festival.

Is it beyond the reach of reason to suppose that the complementary attitudes of these two great musical organizations will eventually be accepted by those who have so much to gain by the bare recognition? Is it too much to presume that studentship will form the habit of entering the one as a test of its acquaintance with the real things of the musical life, and the other as the means of obtaining experience and inspiration in the atmosphere of public performance? The answers to these questions must lie with the organizers of examinations. They have it in their power enormously to augment the usefulness of their own department of effort, and, by the very act, gracefully to acknowledge the path pointed out by the work of the Musical Competition Festival.

One important question, intimately linked with this part of the general subject, remains for sympathetic consideration. In some of the principal

festivals it was formerly the custom to leave the whole machinery of marking to the discretion of the individual adjudicator who, needless to say, used his own private formulae which he was careful to destroy as soon as his decision had been made. There were undoubted advantages in the system. It left the adjudicator free to concentrate upon the general effect of each performance. He was unfettered by the requisition to fill in a list of marks for each competitor, the mere writing and adding up of which now tends to distract him from the thing of the greatest moment to his work—the discovery of the best all-round renderings. It was then realized that one of the finest attributes of an adjudicator is his power to memorize the characteristic features of individual renderings, and that any process which tended to weaken the operation of this power could not but be detrimental to his work as a judge.

The advent of marking-sheets into the scheme of the Musical Competition Festival changed the whole atmosphere of the movement and brought it more directly into line with the machinery of the private examination. For the latter, detailed marks are altogether necessary; they form, in fact, an indispensable part of the scheme. But it is a very serious question whether the use of marks makes for efficiency in the public competition. The work

of the private examiner in relation to each candidate is self-contained. In the bestowal of marks, he has only to consider the candidate immediately before him. His sole concern with the question of standard is that already erected in his mind and which applies equally to all the candidates. The adjudicator, on the other hand, dare not let his attention become fixed upon any one competitor to the exclusion of the rest. His is an infinitely more difficult task than that of his brother musician, the examiner. He is unable to think in a self-contained sense of any of the young people who come before him. Formerly he was able to deal with weak players by cryptic symbols of his own which, when the faults were of general interest, he used as mental stimuli for his closing address. Now he is compelled to give as much attention to the marking of those who receive no awards as to the details concerned with the performances of the successful. There are two points in relation to this matter which call for earnest and weighty consideration.

Firstly, the use of the memorizing instinct—as I have already said—is the most powerful weapon in the mental armoury of the adjudicator. The continued use of marks in a competition which includes some twenty, thirty, or more renderings tends to throw him back upon the actual totals as

a ready means for coming to a quick decision. This means, of course, that, insensibly, but by sure degrees, the competitors become victims of purely numerical values which, in the almost certain absence of a strongly concentrative action of the memory, must dominate the ultimate verdict of the adjudicator. *It is not possible to have it both ways.* Either must the adjudicator be left free to command the exercise of memory, assisted by private signs for his own eye and unimpeded by the side-issue inseparable from comprehensive marking; or must his judgment be largely at the mercy of figures which can be no more than approximately helpful in a decision made upon purely musical grounds.

Secondly, it is virtually impossible to reduce to figures many of the points upon which the judgment of a musician ultimately turns. It is here that marks often prove an intolerable burden. One feels that they express too little or too much. Too little, when they fail to register the very quality or qualities which result in a prize; too much, when, owing to purely physical properties, they exaggerate the musical virtues of the competitors concerned. Nothing is more sure than that, in the case of an adjudicator whose memory is not altogether thwarted by the mechanism of marking, the marks ultimately awarded to prize-

winners are, owing to needful readjustments, often not those originally allotted. The fact shows the inherent weakness of a position which introduces the weapon of the examination room with its fixed standards into an atmosphere of free competition.

Is there, then, no way out of the difficulty save only in the implied alternative? It must be understood that I am not asking for the abolition of marks. That must always be a matter for discretionary action by the governing committees. My task is limited to an expression of opinion which, doubtless, will command attention in proportion to the actual experience of adjudicatorship possessed by those who do me the honour to read it. It would, indeed, seem that, as regards the present all-embracive system of marking, there is no alternative. But the methods of the examination room are not those of the platform of competition, and this probably explains why highly qualified examiners so often prove but indifferent adjudicators. They are saturated with marks, and fail to understand their totally different significance in the arena of the competition.

In dealing with this subject, the thought of the musician's attitude, the conservation at any cost of his 'sixth sense,' should be the tranquillizing medium in every debate upon the use or disuse

of marks. To me it seems that nothing else matters. Yet, like many another detail which affects the musical side of competitive festivals, the question of marks must remain for the accumulation of experience. One motive only ought to stimulate the criticism of present modes of procedure, and that is utter friendliness for a movement which has not only clarified the examination atmosphere, but has brought professed musicians into contact with new paths of brotherhood in the school of rivalry.

CHAPTER VII

THE SCALE PROBLEM

PROBABLY in no department of the procedure of the pianoforte teacher is the effect of modern thought more striking than in his treatment of scales, arpeggios and other keyboard exercises. Healthy views upon the muscular activities have contributed to the change of outlook, but the greatest factor may be found in the recognition of the aural function in the general study of the instrument. Judged in the light of the canons of former days, a student was presumed to have reached his acme of power when the fingering of every scale had attained a stage of certainty sufficient to permit him nonchalantly to career up and down the keyboard as a measure of muscular preparation or as a test of animal endurance. The question of tone was a very variable proposition ; that of muscular resilience, a vague and altogether unplumbed quantity. Hence it may most truly be said that the student of to-day who views the

act of scale-practice from the standpoint of keyboard dexterity or slimness belongs to a past age. His method of practice has outlived its usefulness.

It will be of service briefly to examine the ideals which animated the teachers of but yesterday, and which produced so astonishing a mental attitude towards the problem of the scale. The following may be regarded as the leading motives upon which their treatment of the subject was based.

The first was an outcome of the altogether praiseworthy desire to cultivate the sense of tonality. It was supposed that continual drilling in scales at the keyboard was the first essential in the acquirement of this sense. One could scarcely play too many scales. The scale was the panacea for every tonal woe, the catholicon for all who were innocent of the feeling for key. Many decades of sad experience have not yet brought light to sundry teachers who still follow the unsound and now discredited doctrines of past days. 'One must see that they know their scales' was a recent remark by a very distinguished examiner with reference to candidates whose playing tests included one of the most difficult of Beethoven's Sonatas!

For the second motive we must turn to the not quite lost idea that the practice of scales 'strengthens the fingers.' This is not the place

to enter upon an argument with respect to this very general misapprehension of the past. It is sufficient to observe that modern research into the use and action of the muscles used in playing has not only disposed of the particular theory connoted by the expression, but has pointed the way to more rational forms of discipline for obtaining the end desired.

The third motive was concerned with the question of endurance. Surely, it was argued, a player able physically to continue the playing of a scale indefinitely and without apparent fatigue could be relied upon to display a similar standard of staying power in the general performance of music. This motive was obviously involved with the one immediately before. Misapprehension of the muscular economies of playing would naturally beget a desire to force the muscles to perform certain actions, and to measure success by the number of repetitions achieved before the breaking point was reached.

Hence, with imperfect knowledge of the aural, mental, and physical needs of the scale, the cult of scale-playing attained to unbounded and universal popularity. 'Play thousands of scales!' was the advice once given to a young student by one of the great masters of England's music. Regarded from the standpoint of old conceptions, the advice

was perfectly reasonable. No counsel, however, be it observed, was offered with reference to the aural or harmonic sides of the scale, or even to that part of discipline which is comprehended within the term *tone*. It was mechanical drill which was virtually meant; and, aided by the vacuities of a 'scale-book,' the student was condemned to pass not a little precious time in the pursuit of a veritable chimera of supposititious advantage.

It is possible to trace six stages in the grasp of the scale. These are not invariably taken in the order prescribed below. Considerations of aural, rhythmic or visual perception, pertaining to individual students, render variety in the grouping frequently desirable. The six stages are as follow:

(*a*) The Aural Stage.
(*b*) The Keyboard Stage.
(*c*) The Fingering Stage.
(*d*) The Tonal Stage.
(*e*) The Rhythmic Stage.
(*f*) The Notational Stage.

A word about each is necessary.

(*a*) If I am certain of anything in this world of problems, it is that on no account should the scale be studied apart from harmony. Harmony is the only explanatory basis of every scale-form. When sung or played between tonic and tonic,

to the accompaniment of tonic harmony, the scale is perceived as a tune based upon that harmony. In the aural stage, therefore, the scale should be *sung* by the student within the compass of an octave and in as many keys as lie within the range of the voice, the tonic chord being played at the same time. When facility has been obtained in this simple exercise, the student should proceed to sing the scale (*a*) between mediant and mediant, (*b*) between dominant and dominant, both to the accompaniment of the tonic chord.

The advantages of this preparatory mode of study are manifest. The student becomes conscious of the relative properties of the tone and semitone, the fundamental need in the mental appreciation of the scale. Further, since he arrives by a mental effort at the pitch of the scale degrees, their tonal relationships must become far more vivid to him than when they are merely repeated by fingers undirected by aural grasp.

(*b*) The transference to the keyboard of the aurally perceived scale involves a far greater mental struggle than is usually realized. Each scale has a physical or keyboard atmosphere peculiar to itself,* and, in proportion as each

* Herein may be found the reason why the scale practice of the average student is so often an interminable struggle against overwhelming odds. Tonal keyboard atmosphere, a

atmosphere is mentally grasped, physical freedom in playing the corresponding scale becomes a possibility. This is the reason why no scale should be 'fingered' until its own particular keyboard configuration or atmosphere is clear to the mind as well as to the tactual sense. Many skilful keyboardists who have played scales all their lives are, when deprived of the adaptive aid induced by fingering, unable spontaneously to illustrate the interval-formation of typical passages formed from diatonic scales.

(*c*) Consequently, the fingering stage is for those only who have a thorough acquaintance with (*a*) the aural effect of each scale, (*b*) its keyboard formation. When these two phases of scale-knowledge form a part of the student's equipment, no possible difficulty can arise with reference to the fingering. The many elementary and average players who betray continual uncertainty of scale-fingering are so many examples of attempts to conquer three difficulties simultaneously. It is not given to any individual, at the same moment, (*a*) to learn a scale aurally, (*b*) to become familiar with its keyboard alignment, and (*c*) to apply the

condition so natural to the cultured musician, is, to the mass of elementary players, an unfelt factor. It is too often forgotten that the scale itself cannot bestow the power to feel key upon the keyboard unless the keyboard study have been prefaced by some form of intelligent aural discipline.

fingering peculiar to itself. The very endeavour is a negation of all sanity in study.

(*d*) The tonal sense is acquired, not from the scale *per se*, but from the observation of harmony. An appreciation of tonality arises from an inner perception of the relationships of the scale degrees *in combination*. Accordingly, all attempts to stimulate the tonal instinct by a melodic treatment of the scale—in the form of constant repetitions at the keyboard with no reference to harmony—are doomed to failure. When a student, who has been limited to the practice of the scale in purely melodic forms, betrays a keen consciousness of key, this is not to be attributed to his method of scale study, but to a perception, innate or acquired, of the underlying harmony upon which each scale is built.

Nevertheless, it ought not to be imagined that the scale plays no part in tonal discipline. Key is a many-sided proposition. Its appeal to the tactual sense, for instance, is very marked; but this appeal is effective only when the aural, keyboard formation, and fingering aspects of each scale have passed into the sphere of pure subconsciousness. When this desirable point has been reached—though not a moment before—the practice of fragments of scales and of complete

scales—single-handed with direct harmonic accompaniment and double-handed with an inferred harmonic basis—should henceforward form a definite part of the daily work at the keyboard.

(*e*) To promote the practice of scales in the form of rhythmed groups has long been the dream of keyboard educationists. More is here at stake than is popularly imagined. A rhythmic rendering of a properly accented scale is the final element needed to make the experience one of true musical expression.

While, however, the student is a victim to any of the difficulties incidental to stages (*a*), (*b*), (*c*), or (*d*), he is unable to think of the cursive aspect of the scale other than as a formal procession of evenly moving sounds. The fact indicates the exceeding value of these preparatory stages and the importance to the student of their complete mastery before he ventures upon the path of rhythmic experiment.

There is a present and welcome movement in favour of the extension of the rhythmic idea to every part of study at the keyboard. There are simple forms of exercise which, from the first, present no obstacle to rhythmic expression. There are others which demand a period of preparation before the mind is sufficiently freed from certain

rudimentary difficulties to think clearly and rhythmically. The scale must be included within the latter. To take a familiar analogy: it is scarcely possible that the art of scansion can be profitable when ignorance is displayed of the elementary principles of orthography.

(*f*) The notational stage is the last; and herein may be discovered the best and most logical of reasons for abstaining from the use of those perversions of all educative method known as scale-books. To use the eye during the conquest of the scale is to heap difficulty upon difficulty. The practice brings another sense into play without reason and without profit. The student who learns the scales from notation is, as a rule, insensible to their structure as well as to their individual atmosphere; moreover, this form of insensibility is an accumulative force which ultimately extends to the mental grasp of tonality and reduces the function of scale-playing to a purely mechanical exposition of hand and finger exercises.

It would seem that, in this long reference to scale-study, the primary purpose of this book has been forgotten. This, however, is not the case. I have written upon the subject long and fully, because it is my opinion that many of the

competitors who enter for the scale classes in Musical Competition Festivals are in sore need of a lesson of this kind. Scale competitions may be of infinite benefit to the student. They may also be productive of untold harm. The latter feature is in evidence when, as so often appears, the aim of the competitor is merely to circumvent the presumed efforts of the adjudicator to confuse him in the rapid passage from one scale to another. It is quite evident that the majority of competitors fall back upon one of the 'self-helps' provided for examinees in general; and, although little can be urged against the use of such a means to acquire final malleability of mental adjustment in passing from scale to scale, it should be remembered that, in relation to the scale as one of the educational factors of music, the best results achieved in this direction often represent the lowest form of scale knowledge. Unfortunately, it is possible, by hard and concentrated effort, to gain considerable certainty in dodging about from scale to scale like a bee in its progress from flower to flower; but the issue often shows only too clearly that, in their varied quests, the practiser of scales and the bee have not a little mentally in common.

Enough has been said to show that two distinct paths are open to the student when he enters

upon the study of the musical scales; one in which the aim is limited to the popular conventions of *soi-disant* scale-practice; the other in which the scale is viewed as an important factor making for the aural, physical, rhythmic and, ultimately, the visual development of the student. Needless to say, the latter path should have been the one chosen by every student who submits himself, or herself, to the test of a public competition.

A closing word is imperative. As they are at present constituted, the scale competitions at the various Musical Competition Festivals provide no satisfactorily final means for enabling an adjudicator to come to a decision upon purely musical and educational grounds. The practice of scales and arpeggios may be carried to such a point of mechanical skill that absolute certainty is attained, and no resource is left to the adjudicator but to award distinctions for a form of scale-playing which may, or which may not, be the issue of carefully cultivated insight. While this remains the case, it behoves all competitors and teachers to look at the whole question from an entirely different angle. In all real educational effort, there is a moral side which appeals, or which should appeal, to the highest instincts of the worker. The two

paths, just referred to with reference to the study of the scale, find their prototypes in almost every department of the world of educative art. On the one side, there is the way of shallowness, of superficial ease in the act of study; on the other side, the way of simple honesty of purpose, of good faith in the promise of the art-life. The first appeals to the indolent as well as to those who possess that form of fatal facility which enables them to simulate excellence apart from mental or spiritual struggle; the second, to those alone who perceive the intimacy of the relationship which exists between the best part of their personality and the development of the abstract sense of responsibility.

Therefore, the student who makes his venture in a scale competition should be able to come into court with clean hands. He should be able with confidence to say: 'I have studied the scale aurally, and it is because I have done this that the relationship of every sound is perceptible to me. I have studied the scale harmonically, and, because I have done this, I am able to realize its purpose in the economy of music. My certainty of fingering is derived, not from ceaseless repetitions which are an offence to humanity as well as to logic, but from the fact that the scale was a reality to me before the act of fingering was

applied. My rhythmic rendering of each scale is the natural issue of my previous method of study, and turns what would otherwise be a musically inert and profitless form of practice into a daily act of interest and joy.'

Need it be added that such an experience awaits every student of the pianoforte who is brave enough to take the plunge ?

CHAPTER VIII

'SIGHT-READING'

PERHAPS the most paradoxical of expressions used in relation to music. Elsewhere, I have said the truer term would be *sight-misreading!* That, at all events, is the totality of the result usually achieved by competitors who offer themselves to the test at Musical Competition Festivals.

At the outset, it should be clearly understood that there is no difference between the act of reading the respective notations of music and literature. The main qualification needed for the reading of the daily paper or for the interpretation of the symbols of musical notation is merely the power to pass through the several signs, and immediately to arrive at the sense conveyed by them. Either form of grasp demands that the actual symbols which stand for the one or the other shall offer no obstacle to direct mental contact with the thought of which the symbols form the outward and visible sign.

It is possible that not a few, who agree with the contention in relation to literature, may utterly disclaim its application to the sphere of music, on the ground that the notation of the art is more symbolic than that of literature, more complex and dependent upon more highly sensitized visual processes on the part of the individual. Whilst we may in part agree with this estimate, it is, nevertheless, impossible to escape the conclusion that the necessity which compels us to master the notation of letters in order that we may read and write with ease, cannot, from the nature of the implied analogy, be less binding in the case of music.

Perhaps our ambitions do not extend to actual composition. We may even be content to believe that we shall never be required to express a single note of music on paper. Still, there remains the desire to play; and there is no greater irritation to one obsessed by so thoroughly healthy a desire than the weakness which reduces the act of reading notation to a matter of commonplace calculation.

The latter condition is, in brief, that of the large majority of young people who enter the lists in 'sight-reading' competitions. The reading of music and the playing of music are, to them, two acts of diverse significance, unrelieved by any ameliorating influence in the direction of co-ordination. It is a condition of things which calls for

candid acknowledgment and drastic treatment. The average student of music is unwilling to make the one or to submit himself to the other. It will therefore be valuable to point out a few of the disadvantages which spring from inability to read the notation of music.

Poverty of reading power is one of the most potent causes of low taste. To be unable to take up a new work and to visualize its musical and keyboard possibilities is a heavy premium on knowledge, enterprise, and insight.

Poverty of reading power is a fertile cause of poor interpretative ability. This must of necessity be the case, the act of interpretation being the outward manifestation of an act of conception formed directly from the notation of the composer.

Poverty of reading power spells a condition of musical uselessness. The player who comes to the end of his 'pieces' has run through the entire programme of his achievement, the rest of his keyboard essays proclaiming aloud, not possibility but disability. Frankly, there is no intelligible place in modern musical life for the pianist unable to read a song accompaniment, to take part in an impromptu duet, not to speak of lighter moments in which he may be called upon to help in the interests of comradeship.

Poverty of reading power connotes absolute isolation from musical adventure. One would not willingly castigate a player unable to read many works of the ultra-modern school, but it is my experience that but comparatively few players have it in their power to do more than stumble through the simpler works of pre-modern writers. What is to happen to the players of the future if the subject of reading notation be not taken more seriously? Certain is it that they will be shut out from most modern music or, at least, will have to be at infinite pains to o'erleap the limitation by the constant reiteration of passages upon the keyboard, a process which has the very natural effect of inducing its adherents to develop the physical side of performance at the cost of the intellectual and emotional.

What is the real crux of the problem? The question can best be answered by referring to the mental action in reading literature. Success in this is measured by the rapidity with which the brain translates the written signs into conscious sounds or syllables. The fact throws us back upon the elemental necessity for the training of the aural sense. The child's lesson in reading words is an aural lesson. It is realized as such both by the child and the teacher. Although Latin is a

so-called dead language, it would be impossible to teach it without reference to the aural sides implied by articulation and pronunciation.

This, therefore, is the path which each student of music who wishes to read the notation of his art must also tread. The ear must be placed first in every effort made at, or away from, the keyboard. In a sense, to listen aright is a greater achievement than to play aright. There are many who practise daily and never, on any account, listen to what they are doing. It is a fatuous proceeding, and as likely to develop the intaking sense—the first essential in the act of reading as in every other act concerned with musical skill—as would be the study of an elocutionist whose lips uttered the lines of a poem but whose mind was vacant of the sense enshrined within them.

The act of listening, however, is not confined to work at the keyboard or to the delights—or vicissitudes—of the concert hall. The whole of musical education is, or should be, a series of variations upon the theme LISTEN. It is the fundamental feature in the struggle to read notation. How far, that is, can we penetrate the wilderness of signs and force our way to the promised land? How far can we turn the white notes and the black, the mazes of note-groupings, the perpendicular chordal columns, into intelligible units and

combinations of *sound?* Questions such as these are strictly pertinent to the subject of reading. In every individual case, reading power is, to a very large extent, dependent upon hearing power.

At the same time, it must be equally recognized that, while the ear is the supreme arbiter in every matter connected with music, there are elements in the making of musical notation which require unremitting attention on the part of an altogether different sense; such, for instance, as the *Indication of Pitch* and the *Indication of Time.* These have no counterparts in the notation of letters. On the contrary, the signs of literature are of uniform size and occur in single file. Every form of experience portrayed, the heights and depths of passion, the moments of climax or its converse, need for their expression no more than the simple line of uniformly sized letters.

The notation of music, on the other hand, is vastly different. In place of a single series of symbols, there are often several; instead of the simple line of similarly shaped letters are used notes of various appearances, and these are grouped in an endless diversity of forms. On the one hand, the notation of pitch calls upon the eye to work at perpetually changing levels; on the other hand, it has to grasp the infinite medley

of quantities which form one of the characteristic features of time-notation.

It is for this reason that it is unwise too stringently to press the analogy between verbal and musical notation. While the aural basis of both is an unquestionable reality and should be accepted as the ideal towards which to strive, it is irrational to expect a student immediately to compass the symbols of the musical score as readily and naturally as, with but a small expenditure of elementary studentship, he manages the written page of language. There must always remain the overplus created by the presence of the elements of pitch and time, considerations which do not exist in the economy of letters. Accordingly, the question in the foreground concerns the manner in which these two matters, peculiar to the notation of music, should be approached.

It is at this point that the importance of a direct training of the eye first comes into view. While the ear is overlord, the tribunal at which the musician is ultimately judged, the eye is scarcely, if at all, inferior as a means of grasping the phenomena of pitch and time. Some teachers would urge, for example, that the two sounds of an interval should be aurally appreciated before the notes which symbolize them are viewed upon the

staff. The attitude is perfectly logical and reasonable. The truth, however, appears to be that, when developed upon proper lines, the eye is as great a help to the ear as the ear is to the eye. Consequently, the student of the pianoforte should proceed to master the application of the staff to the keyboard; and, in doing this, he should not restrict his energies to the ten-line staff of ordinary keyboard music. The entire pianoforte staff consists of 25 or 26 lines, 15 or 16 of which—known as ledger-lines—appear intermittently only. Weakness in the grasp of ledger-lines is one of the most prominent features in all 'sight-reading' competitions.

It will be gathered from the preceding paragraph that the aural and visual development of the student should proceed side by side. That, indeed, may be described as the only way to ultimate success.

Of even greater importance is the necessity to obtain mastery over the symbolism of time-notation. With no fear of contradiction to overawe me, I assert that, in public tests of this kind, it is extremely rare to listen to competitors whose time-quantities are invariably correct. Many experiments have confirmed me in the opinion that the mischance is often due, not—as might be supposed—to feebleness of beat and inappre-

ciation of time-values generally, but to a simple inability to read, i.e. immediately to translate into conscious terms the inexhaustible variety of quantities which appear in a musical score of any pretensions.

These two distinct problems—pitch and time—must be dealt with *separately*. The usual plan which sets aside a certain time daily for 'sight-reading' discipline at the keyboard is useless; frankly, it is waste of precious time. I have known many who have conscientiously pursued the habit for years with no appreciable change in their power to read. Those who wish to conquer the difficulty must follow the psychological principle: One thing at one time. There is, in fact, no other way.

We may assent to the foregoing conclusion and yet not be clear with respect to the method to be pursued. The mastery of pitch presents no difficulty to those who are content to eliminate all elements of notation which do not directly bear upon the reading of the staff. The question of time-notation is altogether different. Not only is it greatly misunderstood, but the means adopted to conquer the difficulty are strangely wanting in directness. Thus, the elementary training in time-values given to a beginner is practically always melodic; that is to say, single time-lines, consisting of notes moving in single file, are presented

to the eye as normal examples of the appearance of time in instrumental notation. The fact that it is extremely rare to meet examples of music formed by one line of time-movement does not appear to weigh with the advocates of this system. Yet, it is impossible not to recognize that the simplest keyboard music written for children contains, at least, two time-lines. The same is obviously implied in the case both of the violin solo and the song. Indeed, the whole atmosphere of modern music is alien to the single part of simple unaccompanied melody. The art is formed by a concurrency of parts, and, although these may not be expressed in contrapuntal form, they have, as distinct lines of progression subject to the laws of measurement, to be minutely grasped by the eye.

It is at this point that the melodic treatment of time-values breaks down hopelessly. The voice is often used to express the values of single time-lines, but it is possible to no method, which employs this medium in this particular relation, to indicate two, three, or more lines of time-movement. Further, in the early insistence upon the single time-line may be found the real reason why the mental reception of two or more time-lines—as in the simpler works of Bach—ultimately forms so serious a barrier to the average student. The mind has been trained to think of music as

progressing in a single plane, and it is not an exaggeration to state that a large portion of the subsequent instruction is occupied with leading the student to think—as he ought to have done from the first—in parts.

It is therefore manifest that, from the standpoint of the reader, two issues are here revealed. The first reminds him of the necessity for a complete mastery of the calligraphic aspect of time; the second, of the fact that such mastery depends upon the power to read concurrent parts, each one of which differs from the others in the time-groupings presented to the eye. Accordingly, the development of reading power is intimately concerned with the *mental attitude* towards notation. This is, and must always be, the ultimate determining factor in the march of progress. In all probability, the mental study of music, referred to in a previous chapter, is the only sure and logical path for one who desires to read notation with ease and fluency. Let but a few minutes daily be reserved for the mental reading of musical scores, and steady improvement is bound to follow. Under such conditions, the study of every score exhibits an advance upon the one before, and this must necessarily be the case, seeing that the mind is free for attention to each detail in turn, a consummation impossible to those who, at the key-

board, strive in vain to keep in touch with every detail of the notation.

There is no musician who does not heartily wish success to every movement which makes for greater power in the reading of music. It is evident that the Musical Competition Festivals are equally alive to this truly colossal need of our times. It will, therefore, not be deemed an impertinence if I venture to suggest that a great step forward would be taken were they to substitute, for the conventional tests now held, a reading competition in which the music was given to each competitor an hour previously for study away from the instrument and in a quiet room adjoining the hall of competition.* A test of this kind would immediately reveal the presence of musical perception—or the want of it—in the case of each competitor; moreover, it would neutralize the frequent unfairness of the conventional tests which do not and cannot discriminate between physical and musical ability or inability. The successful reader of notation is he who is able to reveal and interpret

* An obvious objection may arise with reference to the expense involved in procuring so large a number of copies of the same work. This can be readily countered by the requirement that each competitor should purchase his or her copy after the competition. Since a new and interesting work would presumably be chosen for the test, it is inconceivable that any competitor would be loth to secure the music, particularly in view of the circumstances connected with its acquisition.

the music behind the written notes. A reader of this stamp may be physically sluggish in discovering the significances of the signs; but, for him at least, progress in general musical grip is assured. On the other hand, the unsuccessful—or superficially successful—reader is he who, able for purely physical reasons to reproduce the written signs with apparent spontaneity, is yet without the power to translate them into a spiritual atmosphere. There is a world of difference between the two achievements.

It would be a healthy decision which insisted that all competitors in the practical classes of the various festivals should also enter for the reading tests. By this means, the importance of the subject would receive a much-needed emphasis. It is comparatively rare to meet a student with poor reading power who is fully cognisant of his great disability. The majority of players appear to be perfectly content with progress in keyboard mastership, and usually discover, when it is almost too late, that they lack a power vital to the complete enjoyment of music. It is not adequately realized that the many young people who relinquish their musical studies after leaving school are, in reality, the victims of a system which, while it helped them to play pieces, but rarely gave a thought to

the mental barrier erected by notation. The Musical Competition Festival has a vast opportunity for dealing, energetically and radically, with this essential matter. The reading of notation is a national concern, and no movement in the direction of musical education which holds fast to this truth can be in danger of dwarfing its energies or of falling short of its ambitions.

CHAPTER IX

POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS

It might very well be concluded that the self-satisfaction and complacency which so often stamp educational committees is also a characteristic of those indefatigable bodies of men and women who take the musical competitive movement under their protection. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. Perhaps I have been unduly fortunate. It may merely be my good hap that, in every festival at which it has been my privilege to act as an adjudicator, I have been conscious of a quite remarkable desire, expressed on all sides, to discover possible methods of improvement, new channels of usefulness, better means of propaganda.

For indeed, the complete musical festival, as we understand the term to-day with its ramifications into well nigh every branch of musical activity, is, compared with the subject of general education, but a babe-in-arms. Its organizers

have neither had the time to fossilize nor the opportunity to formulate fibrous theories or cast-iron dogmas. Stagnation has not yet reached them with its clamant call to sloth. May the gods grant that it never will!

The nature of the foregoing remarks renders the task before me at once easy and agreeable. Had it been impossible to say as much, this chapter would have been as the vapourings of an enthusiast whose zeal outruns the bounds of convention, if not of courtesy. The fact that the qualities which I have named are native to the competitive movement offers the strongest possible inducement to one who loves music as ever lover cherished his mistress to make a few suggestions pointing to possible developments in the near future.

It were well, here, to observe that, in every change of procedure or addition to a tried programme, the distinction between a private examination and a public competition should be diligently born in mind. The differentiation is integral and vital to either form of activity. Technical tests of musicianship, for instance, should always, without exception, be reserved for the examination room. But there are tests which probe to the uttermost, and which, notwithstanding, are sufficiently free from technicality to be genuinely

interesting to a general audience. Tests of this kind should be allocated to the work of the Musical Competition Festival.

Touching upon this matter of musicianship, I conceive it to be of the first importance that the musical laity should be brought to realize the truths embodied within the term. To the vast majority of—in every other respect—cultivated men and women, musicianship is an inert abstraction, and connotes little more than the power to play upon an instrument or to sing a song. It is the very indefiniteness of the expression, the looseness of the manner in which it is used, the mental poverty of many who claim it as a distinctive of their own attributes, which is at the root of the distemper which invariably afflicts the average man or woman face to face with questions relating to the educational side of music. Were the exact issues involved in musicianship rightly apprehended by parents, for example, there would be no more trouble for the teacher in the training of the young. The cult of music as a pretty accomplishment would become as extinct as the frills and furbelows of past generations.

Here, then, is work waiting to be done, nay, crying out to be done. And by whom? Surely by Musical Competition Festivals. They alone possess the necessary machinery, the test in public

before an audience which, by its presence, testifies to its willingness to learn some of the deeper secrets of music. Let us see in what manner it may be possible to form a few tests directed solely to the task of ascertaining the quality of the musical insight possessed by each competitor.

First in the list, though not necessarily in importance, may be placed the composition selected and prepared solely by the competitor, without the slightest aid either from friend or teacher. One would perforce have to trust to the honour, to say nothing of the good taste, of the competitors to fulfil the fundamental condition of the test; but, judging from the average type of entrants throughout the country, it may be safely concluded that no large draft on the bank of generosity would be necessary to meet the case. The advantages which spring from a performance under these conditions are as numerous as they are frequently surprising. It is an unfortunate and indurated habit of teachers to limit their students to works in the selection of which the latter have no voice. It is an almost inevitable corollary that the art which interprets the music is, as a rule, that of the teachers also. Choice, diction, rendering; these essentials in the study of every composition are watched over by earnest and conscientious

teachers to so great an extent that the performance virtually becomes a reflection of *their* wishes, *their* insight, and *their* experience. It is undeniable that music should constantly be brought to the judgment of the teacher, but ought not the opportunity be systematically given to young people to learn how they may themselves gather judgment and experience? *Experientia docet:* to all, that is, but students of instrumental music! There is, in fact, no being more helpless, more dependent, than the average instrumentalist when the sheltering care of the teacher is a thing of the past. He flounders in his choice. He is tormented with doubts as to the effectiveness and correctness of his 'readings.' And, if he become a teacher, he writes to musical papers under a pseudonym asking questions which he should have resolved for himself in the days of elementary studentship.

It is in this direction that the Musical Competition Festival has it in its power to be of untold help both to students and to teachers. Self-help is the hoariest as it is the grandest of doctrines, when it is descriptive of a yearning for personal advancement towards the ideal. It is an abasement only when it is limited to the cult of the self-seeking and the carnal. I hope to see the day when, in every festival programme, three classes will be devoted to the propagation of the gospel

of self-help. These classes could be roughly cast as follows: (1) Between the ages of 12 and 15; (2) Between 15 and 18; (3) 18 or older. Any objection with reference to the disparity between the ages of competitors in classes 1 and 2 can be met by the simple reminder that, in every award, personality must necessarily be the determining factor. There is but little doubt that personality in choice and personality in interpretation are, to a very large extent, independent of age; and the fact is a sufficient answer to any possible suggestion of unfairness.

The next proposal may be deemed more revolutionary. In the chapter entitled 'The Audience,' attention was drawn to the performances at a competitive festival as a pleasant and helpful discipline in the art of listening. The experience is, of course, open also to the competitors when they are not themselves engaged in ministering to the appreciative sense of the audience. But it seems passing strange that, as far as I am aware, no specifically listening tests of a comprehensive nature have, as yet, been included in any festival syllabus.

It is easy to imagine the potential scene presented by a listening class such as I have in mind. The competitors are sitting in the front rows;

the audience behind. To each competitor is given a sheet of paper upon which is inscribed a series of numbers, say from 1 to 12, sufficient space being allowed for the insertion of answers to the questions asked by the adjudicator. Complete silence having been obtained, the adjudicator plays a piece of very moderate length once, twice, or even three times. Thereupon he puts a few questions upon the character of the music; the number of the individual thoughts; the mode, whether major or minor, of each prominent thought; the presence or absence of climax; the harmonic character pertaining to the whole, whether diatonic or chromatic; the nature of each thought, whether directly melodic or formed mainly by generic figures; the occurrence or non-occurrence of imitative devices; and so forth. Before many questions have been asked, signs of irresolution appear among the competitors. The pencils drop from unresponsive fingers, and all eyes are fixed upon the adjudicator in mute entreaty for another hearing of the music. He responds, and happiness is restored. It is possible that, before the end of the competition, yet another repetition may be deemed expedient. Five minutes are then allowed to enable the competitors to revise their estimates of the music. At the conclusion of the time-allowance, the papers are handed to the adjudicator

who proceeds forthwith to the work of adjudication. Then follows what, quite feasibly, may prove to be the most enjoyable part of the experience. The adjudicator puts the same questions to himself and answers them with illuminating comment at the keyboard.

If, owing to the wonderful possibilities now open to the pianist, the present be the age of the performer, it is, at least, as certain that the equally wonderful growth of the cult of art-appreciation has made this the age *par excellence* of the listener also. To be able to perform music intelligently or to listen to it adequately are both great possessions. It should be the aim of every Musical Competition Festival to foster both branches of musical enlightenment, and, while encouraging the one, on no account to leave the other untouched. *Verbum sat sapienti.*

I approach my third suggestion with more than a dash of the proverbial fear and trembling. Nevertheless, having put my hand to the plough, there can be no turning back, no *arrière-pensée* implicative of want of candour. One of the first signs of musicianship is the desire to express one's self in impromptu music, carved, as it were, out of the experiences of the inner life. This may, it is true, be rendered in permanent form as actual

composition, but it is not of this phase of creative activity that I wish now to speak. Lovers of poetry are often fond of capping slight verses of their own, tender vehicles of thought which reflect an impulse or inspiration of a passing moment. Poetic amateurs of this kind would probably be horrified at the thought of consigning their impromptu lines to the objectivity of cold print. None the less, however, the verses were very precious at the moment of inspiration; and not a little of the joy which comes with devotion to poetry proceeds from the sense of power, if not to make great lines, at least to express the innermost thoughts of the mind in linked-up words of one's own imagining.

The parable is entirely obvious. The power to reproduce in outward form the inwardness of thought is not the prerogative of poetry alone. The musical analogy to impromptu flights of poetic expression is, of course, the extemporization upon the pianoforte of momentarily conceived music. In earlier days the art of extemporaneous playing was greatly esteemed as a token of mastership. It is now, alas, confined to certain recondite circles; though, now and again, it makes its appearance in the person of a distinguished professor of the art who gains thereby much credit and possibly unctuous paragraphs in the daily press.

There are many reasons which account for the gradual decline in public estimation of extemporaneous performance. Chief among them is the infinitely greater attraction which the march of years has given to the art of playing *per se*. The claims of a perpetually increasing repertory of his instrument and the newness of the voices which have called to him in recent years have combined to restrict the instrumentalist to the tonal creations of other minds. Surrounded by an infinite plenitude of music, he has forgotten to beseech the muse for the yet greater light which proceeds from the power to crystallize the fugitive mood in music of his own making.

A more pregnant reason may, however, be found in the greatly increased activity of those who teach harmony as a subject limited exclusively to paper-work. It is true that, of late years, a considerable and altogether welcome reaction has set in against the treatment of harmony upon any other than strictly aural lines. Still, the fact remains that, whether approached aurally—as should be the case—or as a species of mental gymnastics—as it was of old—the actual demonstration of the harmonic truths learned in the course of study is virtually restricted to work with pen and paper. Want of space forbids me to enlarge upon this theme. Reference might have

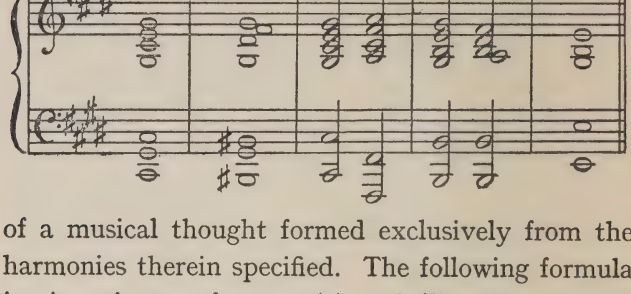
been made at length to the intimacy of the link between harmony and counterpoint, and to the desirability of permitting these two educational forces to influence the development of the student in the diverse paths indicated by their respective characteristics; but it is sufficient to observe that the liquid nature of harmony, its adaptability to every form of expression, its use, as well as its independence, of strict parts, can rarely, if ever, be taught within the stringent confines native to paper-work. The student able to play two simple chords in figured or decorative form has made more advance in a knowledge of the nature of harmony than he would have obtained from the covering of reams of paper with accurate four-part designs unsupported by the power to present them upon the keyboard in idioms peculiar to the instrument.* The act of talking implies a consciousness

* I have said all this before on many occasions. In various articles and in one or two of my books, the reader will find the same argument in elaborated form. I take this opportunity, however, to add that the contention of certain kindly critics, to the effect that the substance of my teaching inclines to a total disregard of the worth of 'paper harmony,' is wholly mistaken. I hold, firstly, that strict counterpoint is an unfailing means of developing the power to write in, as well as to manage, parts; secondly, that harmony should first be taught as sounds in combination formed upon an effectively moving bass-part and wholly irrespective of part-movement, every demonstration to be made directly at the keyboard by the student himself; thirdly, that the power to express acceptable harmonic progressions on paper is the natural union of (*a*) skill in part-writing obtained from counterpoint, and (*b*) power in chordal appreciation obtained from aural appreciation and habitual demonstration upon the instrument.

of the mission and meaning of words. Similarly the act of extemporization is the outcome of a knowledge of the purpose and use of chords. No greater argument could be found for the inclusion in all musical curricula of direct harmonic instruction at the keyboard. It is evident that the work strictly preparatory to extemporization belongs to the private examination rather than to the public competition. An average audience would find no permanence of interest in listening to the stringing together of simple chords. The Musical Competition Festival comes upon the scene when much of the spade work has been done, and appeals to those who have made sufficient progress in the subject to liberate the imagination for interesting flights of fancy.

Classes for extemporization could be of two kinds; one for purely harmonic demonstration; the other for the treatment of a given theme. The first would be for juniors or those of seventeen and under; the second, for seniors or those above seventeen. For the juniors, two tests could be set. For the first I should propose a series of harmonies taken from one of the works of a great master. The following chords, for example, represent the harmonic foundation of five bars of the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 27, No. 2 ('Moonlight'). These I would ask each competitor to

elaborate according to his or her fancy. For the second test, a formula could be given, suggestive



of a musical thought formed exclusively from the harmonies therein specified. The following formula is given in two forms: (*a*) and (*b*); either could be adopted, the one actually to be used being described in the festival syllabus.

(*a*) Tonic—Submediant—Supertonic—
(*b*) I VI II
Subdominant—Tonic
IV I

The test for the seniors would be limited to the extemporaneous treatment of a theme represented by a brief melodic outline. This would, necessarily, be supplied by the adjudicator.

I can conceive no greater delight to an audience than that promised by such attempts on the part of competitors to express passing emotions in music of their own making. The healthier side

of the spirit of curiosity would anticipate the coming of each aspirant with a novel keenness, the inevitable comparisons would be an excellent lesson in musical discrimination, the opportunity to the adjudicator to discourse upon the elemental features of extemporization, an experience of vitalizing interest.

One or two suggestions of a different nature may be added to those already offered. Since the thought of the pre-eminence of music should form the basic motive of every Musical Competition Festival, would it not be possible, by providing two or three lectures upon the subject of musical understanding, to make this still clearer to the inhabitants around? These lectures could, of course, take place during the period of the festival, and, in consonance with their purpose, be strictly limited to educational propaganda. Doubtless in some cases, the adjudicators, being already on the spot, would be willing to take part in the scheme. Lectures of this kind could be founded upon thoughts akin to the following:

i. Music as the natural language of mankind.
ii. Music: the child's readiest form of expression.
iii. The importance of cultivating the art of intelligent listening to music.

iv. The advantages of aural training as a class-subject in school life.

v. Music as an amalgamating influence in the life of the home.

vi. The question of taste, with particular reference to the raising or lowering of the general standards of life.

vii. The importance of general education to the would-be musician.

viii. Music as the spur to the mental, moral, and imaginative life.

Why, it may be asked, should a competitive festival be, as it is so often, a purely ephemeral experience in the lives of those who are inspired by it? Why should it not be an abiding influence in the town or district in which it is held? Why, in brief, should it not take a stand for music, like a beacon, to be seen of all men and to be known as the permanent instigator of the best amateur activity in the neighbourhood around?

Perhaps the best method of securing so attractive an object would be the formation of societies intimately connected, by name and personnel, with the various festivals. It may be objected that to propose yet further additions to the already overburdened list of societies is a counsel of disintegration. This, however, cannot be the case here.

Each competitive festival is already in existence with its paraphernalia of workers, officials, and general sympathizers. To suggest that these may be welded into a yet more intimate bond of usefulness for the advancement of music is merely to suggest the further strengthening of something which is already strong. Man is by nature gregarious, and this quality is never more divinely drawn upon than when it induces him to unite with his fellows in the promotion of a pure and unselfish ideal.

Hence, it would be the particular function of each society continually to tend the sacred fire, and thus, incidentally, to prepare the minds of the people around for the coming of the annual festival, the climax of all the effort of the year. In the course of its propaganda, it would arrange for periodic concerts in which prospective performers at the forthcoming festival would take part. A society of this kind would also give special attention to the cause of chamber music and, conceivably, might, in not a few districts, become sufficiently large to form small orchestras or to yield the material for choral effort. Not the least of its activities could be the provision, throughout the year, of occasional lectures upon various phases of the art of music.

Have I asked too much at the hands of those who wield the destinies of Musical Competition Festivals? There may be two quite different answers to this question. On the one side, it will be said that I am an idealist, an enthusiast, a visionary, a victim of unpractical dreams; on the other side, that competitors would not be forthcoming for tests of so apparently stringent a nature as those first described in this chapter.

With respect to the first charge, let me admit it instantly and with no reserve. But when was enduring progress in the higher life of man ever achieved apart from enthusiasm and a vision of the ideal? The doubt expressed by the alternative will probably be pronounced foundationless by those who have observed the type of student which usually tempts the fates at competitive gatherings. It is a healthy and virile type, composed often of the keenest workers in the various districts. When the issues involved in the suggestions made in this chapter were thoroughly understood, there would, I am confident, be no drawing back, no hesitation to take up the gauntlet, to put the growing powers to the proof.

In all probability, the classes in each competitive festival of the near future will comprise tests of the nature of those here described. It is impossible

that the movement can remain unresponsive to the ideals set forth by the rapidly expanding circle of musical educationists. We have seen the recent addition of aural tests to the premier examinations of this country. It is one of the signs of an agitation which is gathering force from day to day, and which has its source in the animating desire that the knowledge of music shall spread throughout the land, filling it with an unquenchable flame of fellowship in art.

In that movement the Musical Competition Festival must bear a hand. This is, at once, its peculiar privilege and its priceless obligation.

CHAPTER X

MUSIC ONCE AGAIN

FROM time to time one lights upon a book adorned with a binding of peculiar value. Perchance, lovers of letters would not deem the contents worth so precious, so exquisitely wrought a covering. Perchance, it may be an 'Imitation' or another of those works which have brought hope and consolation to men and women bereft of either. 'Ah, then,' we cry, 'that, surely, is the key to the binding!' Not so. The binding may speak only of solicitude, of human comradeship in a friend maybe who has passed beyond. Love for the art of letters may never have distinguished the owner of the book, but the binding is sufficient to attract the eye, to call to the sense of beauty for a glance of approval. There it lies on a table, waiting, not for the vagrant touch, but for the sympathetic contact of an eager and reverential hand.

Even so would I wish this slight book of mine

to be bound with a rare and beautiful binding. But the binding in my mind is not that which the mart of commerce would pronounce worth the having. Rarity and beauty are qualities which do not always derive the estimation in which they are held from standards of monetary value. The vision Beautiful is beyond price and beyond the power of the purse. One can expend much money in the endeavour to reach the Delectable Mountains, only to find that they are unclimbable except to those who have the vision. Therefore, I would that, like the first chapter of this book, the last should bring once again before the reader the vision of the beautiful in music. Thus will the reflections of the chapters between, the suggestions and counsels, the criticisms and words of wisdom —or un-wisdom—be bound within thoughts of the ever-present realness of the world of music.

Of a surety, every book upon a musical subject should begin and end with the thought of music itself; not, necessarily, by way of fervent panegyric, but with reference to the intimacy of its language and the divine charm of its message to man. In this way, the personality of the writer disappears from the horizon of thought and leaves the prospect clear for the purer influence of the mystic tones of the art. These tones are strangely

impelling to those who permit themselves to live under their sway. They speak of a life high in imaginative adventure, a life of pure and exalted resolve, a life, if you can bear the truth, in which to dishonour the spirit of music seems an unholy and noxious crime. Devotion to music is one of the very few undying things in this world of change. Love may grow faint. Faith may undergo transmutations and may even turn to torturing doubt. But solicitude for the message of art is a continually expanding influence which grows without a rival in the soul of man. Many definitions have been attempted of the word *musician*. One only can fit the case: one unable to live without music. Therefore, to be a musician implies the possession of an ineffaceable love for something which, in all the circumstances of the case, must be of a sufficiently compelling and stimulating nature to hold the complete man, spirit, soul, and body.

A consciousness of the reality of these truths should be the inspiring factor in the work of every Musical Competition Festival. But there are other and equally forcible facts to act as a goad to wholehearted enterprise. The right use of music, for instance, is one of the greatest safeguards against the meretricious allurements often open to youth. No festival can be other than proud of its achieve-

ments in this direction. To train a boy, for example, in the appreciation of music means, in all probability, the ultimate direction of his mind into healthy channels of thought and the formation of a new apperception towards the beautiful in conduct, nature, and art. There are many men who have no understanding of music; but, enquire where you will, you shall never find one who, deeply and bitterly, does not regret the fact. No sight is more grateful to a musician than the numerous boys and young men who now enter their names at competitive gatherings. If there be any virtue in the silently expressed wish of an adjudicator, then must an almost innumerable army of youths have felt a strange thrill of invigoration as their call came to arms. The world can never be sufficiently thankful for a movement which has proved the necessity of musical enlightenment for boy and girl alike, a truth which seems to have been kept out of sight by the forces of educational utilitarianism.

Music! And, again, Music! What wonders could it not perform if men and women in general would but take the pains to examine its claims upon the ground of their common humanity alone! We have just come through a devastating war engineered by those who imagined that, were the

myrmidons of carnality but strong enough, they could sweep away every spiritual and compensating influence in life. The contest was between the mirage of ugliness and the vision Beautiful. When such a struggle is waged in sincerity, the issue can never be in doubt; else all that we believe of the world Beautiful were a cruel sham, a malignant imposture upon the soul of man. At least, we know differently. Nevertheless, in all the cries for a world of universal and permanent peace, in all the suggestions for a less ignoble remedy for international complications, one looks in vain for a reference to the softening and chastening influences to be found only in the world of the beautiful, that world in which the art of music occupies so lofty a position. To man, the brute, the thought of permanent peace is a chimerical figment, an undesired eventuality; to man, recreated by the vision Beautiful, it is an energizing power which extends to every relationship with his fellow-creatures. For it is the special function of the vision to beget fellowship, to bring about that universal reign of brotherhood which is the dream of every pure-souled missionary in the cause of humanity.

Here, again, is an inspiration for the musical competitive movement. There may be some connected with its activities who have not before

realized the immensity of the issues with which they are so intimately concerned. It is a constant temptation to us all to allow ourselves to be bewildered by our immediate environments. The call has now come for the creation of a public consciousness of the breadth of the sympathies aroused by the Musical Competition Festival. The thought that the smallest and—as it may be tempted to deem itself—most insignificant festival is doing work for the direct regeneration of the human race is inspiring in the demands which it makes upon the virtues of faith and courage.

It is time to stay my hand. Many things have been left unsaid; many more have been said clumsily. The pen of the ready writer rarely consorts comfortably with the readier tools of the musician. At least, it has been my privilege to point out the loftiness of the aims and the sanity of the methods of the Musical Competition Festival; but it has been a still greater privilege to emphasize the underlying motive of its multifarious activities. This motive is crystallized in the one word MUSIC. No thought of mine can add to the significance of this one small word to those who have learned somewhat of the reality of the inward life. To such, music is one of those things which exact fidelity, not upon the ground of rigid precept, of

unbending and inflexible law, but because of the love which they awaken in the hearts of their devotees.

This book has often strayed from the immediate purpose of its being. It may even be regarded as a masterpiece in the art of digression. Nevertheless, all amends shall now be made. Written for the advancement of the cause of the pianist, our last thoughts shall be of him and of his opportunities under the ægis of the competitive festival. In these pages he has learned anew the truth that, to be a musician, is a far greater thing than to be a mere performer. At the same time, he has been shown that the happiest is to be both the one and the other, and, for his consolation and encouragement, that, however puny and futile his present powers may seem to be, the great hope of winning through may be his if he but put first things first in the act of daily study. First, then, is Music, its intaking and intelligent appreciation. Having this, all else shall be added to him.

Many lay writers have said pregnant and purposeful things about music. One—Leigh Hunt—has left us a delightful picture of the emotions of one who has reached a plateau of full experience in the study of the pianoforte. It is fitting that

I should take leave of my readers with words so suitable and inspiring :

A LOVER OF MUSIC TO HIS PIANOFORTE (1844)

O friend, whom glad or grave we seek,
Heaven-holding shrine !
I ope thee, touch thee, hear thee speak,
And peace is mine.
No fairy casket full of bliss,
Out-values thee :
Love only, wakened with a kiss,
More sweet may be.

To thee, when our full hearts o'erflow
In griefs or joys,
Unspeakable emotions owe
A fitting voice :
Mirth flies to thee, and Love's unrest,
And Memory dear ;
And Sorrow, with his tightened breast,
Comes for a tear.

Oh, since few joys of human mould
Thus wait us still,
Thrice blessed be thine, thou gentle fold
Of peace at will.
No change, no sullenness, no cheat,
In thee we find ;
Thy saddest voice is ever sweet—
Thine answer, kind.

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